



THE  
MISCELLANEOUS WORKS  
OF  
ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.A.S.

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VOL. VIII.

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SERMONS.  
VOL. IV.

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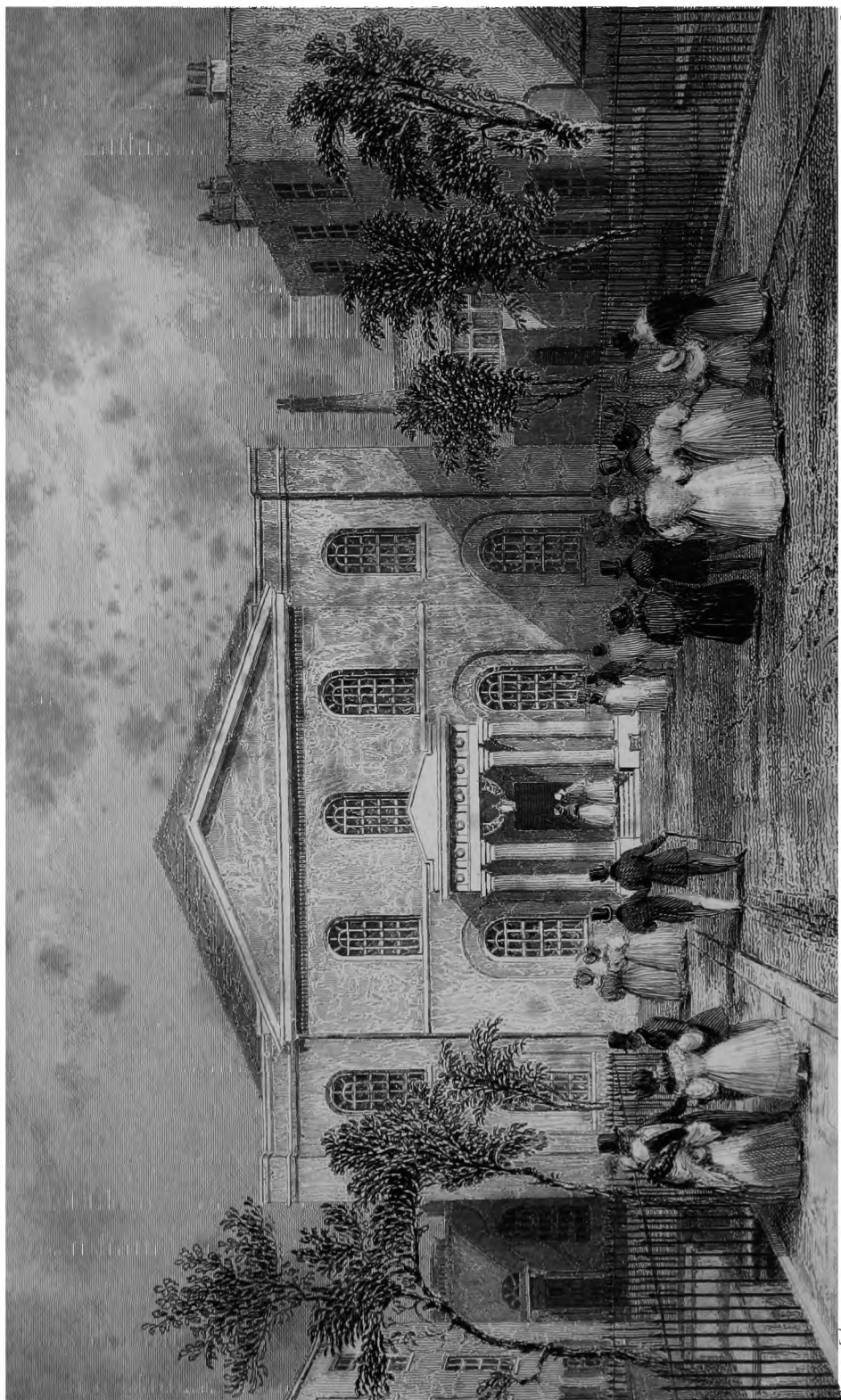
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DISCOURSES  
ON  
VARIOUS SUBJECTS  
RELATIVE TO THE  
BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD;  
AND HIS WORKS,  
IN CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND GRACE.

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.A.S., &c.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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# SERMONS.

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## SERMON XLIV

### THE HISTORY OF THE RICH MAN AND THE BEGGAR.

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LUKE xvi. 19—31.

19. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day :

20. "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gates, full of sores,

21. "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table ; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried ;

23. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame.

25. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.



26. "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

27. "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house :

28. "For I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.

30. "And he said, Nay, father Abraham : but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31. "And he said unto them, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

## ADVERTISEMENT.

NEARLY twenty years ago, I met with and read that sermon of the Bishop of Clermont, entitled, "*Le Mauvais Riche*." I was surprised to find that the author did not view this rich man as a profligate, abandoned character, but on the contrary as an innocent man, in comparison of multitudes who make no doubt that they shall rest eternally with God. The more I examined the subject, the more I was convinced his view of it was correct. As far as I recollect, for I have not read his sermon since, I have gone on the same principle in the following discourse.

A conviction that the subject is of great importance, and that it is generally misunderstood, has induced me to lay my thoughts on it before the public. In doing this I aim at two grand objects : 1. To console the pious *poor man* under his afflictions and poverty, by showing him that he is an object of God's tenderest regards, that his sorrows must soon terminate, and that he shall shortly be with his Maker in everlasting blessedness ; and thus to reconcile his mind to his situation.

2 To show the *rich*, who live an ungodly, voluptuous

life, that though their conduct may not be disgraced by flagrant acts of iniquity, yet if they have been destitute of true piety to God and beneficence to man, in a word, if they have not given God their hearts, and have not honoured him with their substance in doing good among men, they never can inherit that glory where only the pious and beneficent shall ever be permitted to enter.

I have said little concerning the case of those who are merely *covetous*, whose maxim is, *Rem si possus recte; si non, quocunque modo rem*: “to acquire property by just means if convenient, but if not, by whatever means may present themselves.” The case of such is already adjudged, the universal voice of God and man condemns them. They get all they can, and keep all they get; nor does society even ultimately benefit by their luxury, for in this way, their money never circulates—even the supply of their own wants is felt a heavy tax upon the vile and degrading principle by which they are actuated. Charity itself says, “The salvation of such is impossible.”

Much more might have been said at the conclusion of the discourse, on the Sufficiency of Divine Revelation for all the purposes of life and godliness; but I omitted this, knowing that several excellent sermons have been already written on that part of the subject; the best of which is, I think, that of M. Saurin, entitled, “*La Suffisance de la Revelation*,” *Œuvres*, vol. i., p. 404, &c., from which I have taken a few sentences, which are acknowledged in their place. M. Saurin’s Sermon, for elegance of diction, perspicuity of method, and cogency of reasoning, has scarcely its equal in any language.

ADAM CLARKE.

## HISTORY OF THE RICH MAN AND BEGGAR.

THE context informs us, that our Lord delivered the preceding awful history on the following occasion. Some pharisees being present, whose hearts Christ knew were inordinately attached to the world, who had the form of godliness, but were destitute of its power, and yet pretended to be the only servants of the Almighty; to awaken them to a due sense of the inconsistency of their conduct, and the vanity of their expectations, our blessed Lord repeated a sentiment which he had formerly delivered in his sermon on the mount, viz., “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other;” and this he urged home on their consciences with, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” This maxim could not be successfully controverted; it being sufficiently evident that we fully serve him only, whom we love supremely; for a man cannot be in perfect indifference betwixt two objects which are incompatible; he must at least comparatively hate and despise what he does not love supremely, when the necessity of making a choice presents itself. These sayings gave the highest offence; for the sacred writer immediately observes, ver. 14: “The Pharisees *φιλαργυροι υπαρχοντες* (being lovers of money), having heard these things, derided him (*εξεμυκτηριζον αυτον*);” a phrase which cannot be literally translated, but which signifies, “they treated him with the utmost indecency and contempt:”\* and why? Because they were *lovers of money*, and he showed them that all such were in the utmost danger of perdition. As

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\* *Μυκτηριζω απο του μυξιν τοις μυκτηρσι.* —Hesych.

they were wedded to this life, and not seriously concerned for the other, they considered him one of the most absurd and foolish of men, and worthy only of the most sovereign contempt, because he taught that spiritual and eternal things should be preferred before the riches of the universe.

From what farther passed on this occasion we learn that they not only gave their hearts to the world, but endeavoured to justify themselves before men, in doing it; i. e., they endeavoured to make it appear to *others* that though they felt an insatiable thirst after the present world, yet they could secure the blessings of another; reconcile God and mammon, and serve two masters of opposite interests with equal zeal and affection. And in this they were unhappily successful; for, as in their outward conduct they were conformed to the letter of the law, the people not only considered them as saints, but had them highly in estimation (ver. 15), and were doubtless influenced in their example to act in the same way. Had the matter ended here, the ungodly Pharisees might have triumphed in their scorn, and the common people have been confirmed in their worldly-mindedness. Something therefore was necessary to be done, in order to confound these lovers of mammon, to undeceive the people, and to instruct all succeeding generations, which was this, to prove by example on the authority of eternal truth, that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; and that howsoever conformed to the letter of God's law his outward conduct may be, yet if his money be his idol, and his belly his god, he can never enter into the kingdom of heaven, though no outward viciousness can attach to his character. He shall perish, merely because he loved the world, and did not love God with all his heart; while the poor afflicted godly man, who was destitute of every

earthly good, but whose heart was replenished with love and piety towards his Maker, shall at his demise be infallibly taken to the regions of the blessed.

In order to accomplish these great purposes, our blessed Lord thus addressed them : “There was a certain rich man at Jerusalem,” &c. Before I proceed to consider the different parts of this portion of Scripture, it may be necessary to inquire in what light the whole passage should be viewed. Is it a *parable*, or a *real history*? Many of the primitive Fathers\* supposed it to be a *real history*, because the circumstances are more distinctly marked in this, than they are in mere parables ; and besides, there is a man’s name mentioned in this account, which is never done in any parable, however the connecting circumstances may seem to require it. Others assert that it is a *parable* ; and this they contend for principally, because they are not willing that any of the facts mentioned in it should be literally understood. Of all the modes of interpreting the Sacred Writings, the allegorical and metaphorical have ever appeared to me the most exceptionable and dangerous ; and for the purposes of general edification, the literal method is undoubtedly the best. With fear and trembling should any man depart from the literal meaning of a text, except where a metaphor is evident, and a spiritual sense plainly indicated. As I am not certain how far this passage is to be metaphorically understood, and as a literal explanation of it conveys a perfectly consistent sense, I shall prefer the latter, and shall not attempt to decide on the question, whether this be a real history or a parable, though I cannot help leaning to the former opinion. If it be a parable, it is a representation of what may be ;

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\* Irenæus, Ambrose, Tertullian, Euthymius, Gregory the Great, &c.

for parable properly signifies a near representation of the truth. If it be a real history, it is a description of what has been. Either a man may live as is here described, and go to perdition when he dies, and so the parable proves the possibility of the thing; or some have lived in this way, and are now suffering the torments of an eternal fire. The account is equally instructive in whichever of these lights it be viewed.

Let us carefully observe all the circumstances offered here to our notice, and we shall see,

- I. Why this man's soul was sent to perdition? And,
- II. In what his punishment consisted.

“There was a certain rich man” in Jerusalem, ver. 19. As it is most likely this was a true history, there is no doubt our Lord could have mentioned the name of this rich man, as well as that of the beggar; but as this might have given offence, he with great delicacy passes it by. It is true, in the scholia of some ancient copies of this chapter, he is called Nineve; but this seems to be an attempt to be wise above what is written, and on it no dependence should be placed.

He was *rich*. As this, according to our Lord's account, stands in the number of his vices; it is of the utmost consequence to the whole history to understand what is meant by it? Were the solution of this question, What is implied in being rich? left to those who are inordinately attached to the goods of this life, the answers would be strangely various, as each would give a definition according to the quantum of the covetous principle which ruled his own heart. We must therefore find some general definition which will explain the import of the word, and determine its meaning.

As *riches* are put in opposition to *poverty*, and we know that poverty implies being destitute of the neces-

saries, conveniences, and comforts of life, then we may safely infer, that to be rich implies being possessed of all the necessaries, all the conveniences, and all the comforts of life. He who possesses these is indisputably a rich man. But what are these ? By the *necessaries* of life we must understand a sufficiency of nourishing meat and drink, with such clothing as is suited to the state of the body, the nature of the climate, and a man's circumstances in life. By the *conveniencies* of life, a proper habitation, decent furniture, and suitable attendance. And by the *comforts* of life, we may understand what pleases the eye and gratifies all those reasonable desires which contribute in the most effectual manner to promote the health of the body, preserve it in vigour, and prolong its life. A man, it is true, may possess all these and not think himself rich, but be a continual prey to earnest longings after more ; for,

Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit,

the love of money increases in proportion to what a man gains—but these unreasonable desires do not belong to the question, 1. Because the gratification of them could not contribute to his happiness, who has already all the necessaries, conveniencies, and comforts of life ; and 2. Because such gratification would infallibly injure, if not ruin him, as whatever is forced upon nature beyond what it needs, must impair the health, enfeeble the constitution, and in the end destroy life. In the above sense, a man may be innocently rich ; but there is a sense in which to be rich is criminal ; i. e., when a man gets all he can, suppose even by honest means ; and though he acquires much more than he needs, yet keeps all he gets ; and he is more especially criminal when he expends any portion of his affluence on foolish, unreasonable, and sinful desires, neglecting the poor in whose

behalf God has put him in trust with this extra property. How awful are riches when we find they are so difficult to be managed ; and what a solemn account must be given of them to God in the day of judgment ! The person in the text is said to have been rich ; to this circumstance our Lord adds nothing ; he neither says that he was born to a large estate, nor that he had acquired one by unjust means ; nor that he was proud, insolent, and oppressive in the possession of it ; nothing of this kind is intimated in the text, it would be utterly improper to attempt to deduce it by way of inference. This alone appears pretty plain ; he got all he could, kept all to himself, and lived without God in the world ; this was the first step to, and cause of, his perdition.

2. The matter of his clothing should be particularly considered. The text says, “He was clothed with purple and fine linen.” *Purple* (*πορφυρα*), Pliny says, is a species of marine shell-fish, which has a white vein between its jaws in which a small portion of that precious liquor is contained, which was made use of to dye garments.\* The finest species of this shell-fish was found at Tyre ; hence the Tyrian purple, so celebrated through all antiquity ; and this was so costly, that the same author tells us a pound of it could not be bought for a thousand denarii,† equal to £31 5s. sterling. This costly clothing was worn principally by emperors, princes, and generals, and was originally used as an emblem of illustrious birth, or to designate some important office. But in the times of Roman degeneracy, it became an article of

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\* Sed purpuræ florem illum tingendis expetitur vestibibus, in mediis habent faucibus : liquoris hic minimi est in candida vena unde pretiosus ille bibitur, &c. Hist. Nat. lib. ix., cap. 36.

† Dibapha Tyria, quæ in libras denariis mille non poterat emi. Ibid., c. 39.



dress. "He was clothed also," the text says, "in FINE LINEN," βυσσον. The Byssus, according to Pliny, was a species of fine flax that grew about Elis, in Achaia, and was as precious as gold, for a scruple of it, he says, was sold for four denarii,\* about 2s. 6d. Calmet contends that the Byssus, called in Hebrew בור butz, and mentioned for the first time, 1 Chron. xv. 27, as that with which David was clothed when he brought the ark from the house of Obed-edom, was that silky tuft adhering to the Pinna Magna, a species of large muscle, sometimes more than four feet in length, and by which it attaches itself to other bodies.† This shell-fish, Mr. Tournefort says, is found along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, from Constantinople to Egypt. Of this beautiful substance it is certain, that very splendid garments were made among the ancients; and it is likely that from this the sacerdotal garments of the Jews were made. St. Basil and Procopius particularly mention it. We have thus seen the matter of which the clothing of this rich man was composed, and though the whole was extremely costly, yet it is not intimated that his purple and fine linen were unsuitable to his place, birth, or official dignity. If he were a ruler, his rank in life might have required this clothing; but be this as it may, it is not at all insinuated that he followed any ridiculous fashion, exceeded the bounds of his income, clothed himself at the expense of others, or endeavoured to debauch the heart of the giddy and unexperienced, or ever made his love of dress an

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\* Circa Elim in Achaia genito; quaternis denariis scrupula ejus permutata quondam, ut auri reperio. Hist. Nat., lib. xix., c. 1, in fine.

† Harum Pinnarum altitudo aliquando quatuor pedes excedit. Lanam seu Byssam ex ea parte, qua in terra figitur emittit. Vid. Index Conchylior. N. Gualteri, Tab. lxxviii., fig. A., where the reader may see the figure of this extraordinary shell.

agent to greater crimes. Nevertheless, our Lord lays this down as the second cause of his perdition: "He was clothed in purple and fine linen;" and probably felt little, if any concern, for those who were destitute of necessary covering.

3. Having examined his clothing, we may next consider his daily fare. Though the matter and quality of the first are particularly noticed by our Lord, yet in reference to the second, he says no more than this, "He fared sumptuously every day," *εὐφραينوμενος καθ' ἡμέραν λαμπρως*. He had splendid feasts daily, accompanied with great hilarity, for this the original word *εὐφραίνω*, imports; and in this sense it is frequently used: see chap. xv. 23; Acts ii. 26, vii. 41; Rom. xv. 10; Gal. iv. 27, &c.

From the whole account it is plain that this man kept what is termed *a good table*, and no doubt had constant companions in his daily festivities. But let us inquire how far all this appears from the letter of the text, to be criminal. It is well known that the law of Moses, under which this man lived, forbade nothing but excess in eating and drinking. Indeed, it seems that a person was authorized by that law to enjoy the sweets of an abundance which it promised to those who faithfully observed its precepts. "The Lord shall make thee plenteous in good—in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, and in the fruit of the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers to give thee," Deut. xxviii. 11, xxx. 9. "If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures," Job xxxvi. 11. From these and similar promises, it is evident the Jews were led to expect great temporal prosperity and abundant pleasure; and therefore, faring sumptuously every day might be considered by this man in the light of a duty, and not in that of a crime. Besides, it is not said that he ate any kind of food pro-

hibited by the law, nor is he accused of neglecting any of the abstinences or fasts prescribed by it. His daily sumptuous fare is not said to have been carried to any kind of excess, nor to have administered to any species of debauch. He is not accused of licentious discourse, of gaming, of frequenting places of illicit entertainment or pleasure ; nor of speaking one irreverent word against divine revelation, nor against the providence, ordinances, or people of God. It is not even intimated that he got drunk at his festivities, or held the bottle to his neighbour's head to intoxicate him. In a word, his probity is unimpeached ; nor is he even in the most indirect manner accused of any of those crimes which pervert the simple from the way of truth, or injure any of the orders of civil society. As Christ has described this man, does he appear a monster of iniquity as some have represented him ? No. He is a comparatively innocent character. Yet in the sight of God he is culpable—deserves hell, and gets it. What then were his crimes ? Why, 1. He was rich ; 2. He was superbly clothed ; and 3. He fared sumptuously every day ; i. e., he sought his happiness in this life, in the gratification of animal desires. He made no provision for his soul, living without God in the world.

Now as to most this does not appear any sufficient reason why a soul should be sent to hell, because they think that only the most profane and the most profligate ever go thither, therefore men have toiled from their own conjectures to represent the person in the text as an impious man, an uncharitable, hardhearted and unfeeling wretch. But of all this, is there one word either spoken or intimated by Christ ? Not one. And I again assert it, that it is unjust, unfair, and highly dangerous to put such meanings on the word of God, as it cannot and will not, by proper construction, bear ; and he that

does it, does it to the peril of his soul. But let us consider the leading circumstances, and we shall be convinced that our blessed Lord has not represented this man as a monster of inhumanity, but merely as an indolent man, who sought and had his portion in this life, was unconcerned about another, lived without piety to God, and without usefulness to man.

When Abraham addressed him, ver. 25, on the cause of his reprobation, we do not find that he reproached him with an uncharitable disposition, or an unfeeling heart, though that would have been the most proper of all times to have done it in. He does not say, "Lazarus was hungry, and thou gavest him no meat; he was thirsty, and thou gavest him no drink," &c., but he said simply, "Son, remember that thou didst receive thy good things in thy lifetime," i. e., thou hast sought thy consolation upon earth, thou hast borne no cross, mortified no passion, didst not receive the salvation God had provided for thee; thou didst not belong to the people of God upon earth, and thou canst not dwell with them in glory.

There are but few of those called Christians, who consider it a crime to live without Christ, because their lives are not stained with any gross transgression of the moral law of their Maker. "If Christianity," says one, "only required men to live without outward sin, paganism could furnish us with many luminous instances of this kind." But the religion of Christ not only requires a conformity in a man's conduct to all the principles of righteousness and truth, but it requires also holiness in the soul, a heart reconciled to and wholly influenced and governed by the spirit of purity and benevolence which dwelt in the Lord Jesus.

Having thus taken a view of the causes which led this honourable person to the place of torment, the cha-

racter and circumstances of Lazarus must be distinctly inquired into.

“There was a certain beggar named Lazarus,” ver. 20. The word *πτωχος*, which we translate *beggar*, signifies a poor man; and does not mean beggar in the common acceptation of the word; i. e., one who goes about from door to door soliciting alms; such a person being termed *επαγτης*, among the Greeks.

The name of this person is mentioned, because his character was good and his end glorious, and because it is the purpose of God that the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Lazarus is undoubtedly a Hebrew name, and may be compounded of *ל*, *la*, *not*, and *עז* *ezer*, *help*, intimating that he was a person destitute of all assistance. But as it appears he stood high in the favour of God, and though outwardly destitute of all things, yet was inwardly supported by the grace and mercy of his Maker; it is therefore more likely that Lazarus here is a contraction for *אליעזר* Eliezer, “God is my help,” which is not mentioned here without design, as it strongly intimates that God alone is the succour and confidence of the destitute; and that the person in the text had God for the portion of his soul, even when destitute of a morsel of bread, and his flesh and heart utterly failing. This name therefore was properly given to a man who was both abjectly poor, and deeply afflicted, and had no help but that which came from him.

Of this poor man it is said, “he was laid at the rich man’s gate, and he was full of sores.” Whether his lack of the necessities of life were the cause of his affliction by impoverishing the blood and other juices, or whether his poverty sprung out of his affliction, by rendering him incapable of getting his bread, is not intimated in the text. His abject and helpless state is sufficiently marked. He was full of sores, so as to feel constant pain. He

could not even change his posture through his utter helplessness, without the ministry of others, for (εβεβλητο) he was laid at the gate, he had neither power to come thither himself to get relief, nor depart from it when weary of waiting. Who could have thought that a man in such an abject, afflicted state, could have been a favourite of heaven? Could not the God who appears to have loved him so well, have healed his sores, and raised him above want? Undoubtedly he could; but God, who knoweth all things, knoweth particularly what is in man, and what in all possible change of circumstances he will do, probably knew that Lazarus could not be trusted with either health or affluence, and therefore in his abundant mercy he kept him in a poor and afflicted state. Many who are now poor, humble, and pious, were they to get into a state of affluence, would wax proud and insolent, forget God, and go at last to perdition.

He “desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table,” ver. 21. He had no desire to fare well as the rich man, he wished only to satisfy himself with the fragments which were left. And there is no room to doubt but his humble desires were gratified, for there is not the smallest intimation that he was refused, though most interpreters of this passage make no scruple to assert it. I feel myself justified in drawing this conclusion; for as we find (ver. 24) that the rich man desired that Lazarus should be sent to cool his tongue with one drop of water, is to me a strong intimation that he considered him under some kind of obligation to him; for had he refused him a crumb of bread in his life-time, it is not reasonable to suppose that he would have requested such a favour from him now. Indeed, there is not the least evidence in the text that any part of the

rich man's punishment was owing to his cruelty or hard-heartedness towards this distressed beggar.

“ And the dogs came and licked his sores.” Though this circumstance still more strongly marks his abject state, and shows that he was really diseased, and that his sores were exposed, yet it is certainly intended to prove that he had some alleviation of his affliction. Among the ancients, the tongue of the dog, applied to obstinate ulcers, was considered a sovereign help ; and therefore the heathens painted their medical god, *Æsculapius*, as being always accompanied with a goat and a dog, the latter to lick the ulcers, and the former to wash them with her milk. Mercy is mingled with all our afflictions and distresses. However destitute we may now be, we might have been still worse. It is ever in the power of God, by the addition or deduction of apparently trifling circumstances, to increase or alleviate our sufferings and calamities, by almost innumerable degrees. Wretched as this man's state was, he was kept alive till his work was done, and his soul completely prepared for the kingdom of God, though he had only the crumbs for his food, and the dogs for his physicians.

In process of time Lazarus is relieved from his afflictions : “ it came to pass, that the beggar died,” ver. 22. It is in the order of God's gracious providence that poverty and affliction destroy their own influence, by sapping the foundation of life. He who suffers most, has in general the shortest time to suffer in, for the more exquisite the sufferings, and the more extensive the privations of corporeal necessities, the sooner life must ebb out ; and consequently, to a truly pious man in such circumstances, the road to the kingdom of heaven is considerably shortened. A hurried passage into the glory of God can hurt no man. Death and life occur in the

same instant. When the work of death was finished, eternal life began ; for it is added, “He was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom.” What an astonishing change both in place and circumstances ! But a moment before, he was an ulcerated beggar, lying at the rich man’s gate ! And now, healed of all his diseases, and shut out for ever from the possibility of suffering, he is safely and immutably fixed in the regions of blessedness. The phrase, “Abraham’s bosom,” is an allusion to the custom at Jewish feasts, when three persons reclining on their left elbows on a couch, the person whose head came near the breast of the other, was said to lie in his bosom. So it is said of the beloved disciple, John xiii. 25. He who occupied the next place at such entertainments to the master of the house, was the person who was nearest of kin, or highest in esteem. The Hebrews conceived paradise to be a place of spiritual delights, where the blessed enjoyed a continual feast. They represented Abraham as head of the nation, at the top of the table, and all the children of his faith as reclining with him, according to the eastern manner, at the same table ; some nearer, and others farther off, according to their different degrees of holiness, &c. Lazarus, as his most beloved son, is here placed next to him, to intimate that, being fully conformed to the image of God, he is raised in the regions of the blessed, to the highest degrees of honour and favour. That by the bosom of Abraham, חיק של אברהם *chik shel Abraham*, or sitting at table with him, the ancient Jews understood the future state of the blessed, is sufficiently proved in a variety of quotations made from the rabbins, by Lightfoot, on this passage ; and our Lord not only refers to but countenances this opinion in the following words : “Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down (*ανακλιθουσινται*, literally, shall sit down at table) with Abra-



ham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. viii. 11. Our Lord adds, that "he was carried by angels" to this place. This also was an opinion uniformly believed by the Jews. Angels were supposed to attend the separation of the souls and bodies of the just, and carry them straight into the paradise of God ; by speaking as he does here, our Lord appears to confirm the opinion ; and St. Paul assures us that the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14 ; and the ministration that he principally refers to is that of conducting the blessed into that state of final salvation, of which they were become heirs, by having been made children of God, Gal. iii. 6, 7, though it includes that of ministering to them by the order of God, on different occasions during life.

II. We come now to consider in what the punishment of this rich man consisted ?

Before punishment can take place, death must separate the body and soul. Sin cannot be adequately punished in this life. Such punishment would destroy the body—human nature, in its present state, could not endure it ; the soul, in its separate state, can ; because it is immortal and indestructible ; and the body, after the resurrection, may ; because, to make it a proper companion for the soul, it must be redeemed from all that corruption which tends to dissolution, and be built up on indestructible principles. In a state of probation sin cannot be punished ; therefore we are properly informed that the rich man died, before any part of his punishment took place.

Of the last days of this man no more is said than this : "The rich man died, and was buried." There is no mention of this latter circumstance in the case of

Lazarus ; buried he undoubtedly was, necessity required this ; but he had the burial of a pauper ; while the pomp and pride of the other no doubt followed him to the tomb. Though the poor man died first, God in mercy having abridged his days, yet the rich man died in his turn. His great possessions could not secure to him that life which he so highly prized. He was obliged to leave all behind—his house, his estates, his family, and social connexions ; his animal appetites, with all their means of gratification ; and detested and detestable funereal honours, the mock and insult of human glory, alone accompany him to the verge of the grave, and these, even these, bid adieu to a carcase that is fallen into disgrace. What an awful change has time and providence brought about ! Alas ! why could not time tarry for him, who had lived for it alone ? If useless in the world, yet he was harmless, only endeavouring to make himself happy in the enjoyment of what providence had made his own.

Eheu fugaces, postume, postume,  
Labuntur anni!—

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

— sive reges

Sive inopes erimus coloni.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Linquenda tellus et domus et placens

Uxor ; neque harum, quas colis, arborum

Te, præter invisas cupressos,

Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.

HORAT.

But what a difference even in the burial of these two persons. Several ancient MSS. and Versions, as well as the first English translation, read the place thus : “ The rich man died, and was buried in hell.”\* While his body

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\* In some ancient MSS., as well as in the Saxon and Vulgate, the point after *εταφη*, *he was buried*, is lacking, and the following

descended into the grave, his soul went down into the place of torment. So that in this case at least, it was true, here rested the body of a damned soul ! Reader, may the God of heaven save thee from this place of torment ! But what are we to understand by hell ? the place in which the text says he was tormented. The word in the original is, 'Αδης, *hades*, which properly signifies a dark or obscure place, from α, negative, and ιδειν, *to see* ; very properly translated by our English word HELL, from the Saxon HELAN, *to cover or conceal*. Hence HYLING, the covering or slating of a house. It answers to the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל *sheol*, which, among the ancient Jews, signifies the place where the souls of the just and unjust were kept, while in a state of separation from the body. The Greeks supposed their *hades* to be a dark, gloomy place, deep under the earth, where the souls of the righteous and the wicked were detained, previous to their being sent, the former to Elysium, the latter to Tartarus. This place, with all its appendages, according to the heathen Mythology, is described at large by Virgil, *Æn.* VI., l. 268, &c. From what our Lord says of it, and of Abraham's bosom, we may understand that simply the place of separate spirits is intended ; where those who died without God have a foretaste of the punishment they are to endure after the day of judgment ; and where those who die in the divine favour enjoy a foretaste of their future blessedness. Neither the summit of glory, nor the depth of perdition, are suited to the nature of disembodied spirits ; when rejoined to their bodies, the one is capable of enduring the miseries, the other of enjoying the happiness of the eternal world.

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και, *and*, removed and set before επαρας, *lifting up* ; so that the passage reads thus : " The rich man died, and was buried in hell ; and lifting up his eyes, being in torments, he saw," &c.

Let us now view the circumstances of this man's punishment. Scarcely had he entered the abodes of misery, when he lifted up his eyes on high; and what must be his surprise, who never dreamed of going to hell, to see himself separated from God, and to feel his soul tormented in that flame! Neither himself nor friends ever expected that the way in which he walked could have led to such a perdition.

In a general and collective sense his punishment is indicated by his "being in torments." His torments were as various as his faculties and powers, and therefore they are spoken of in the plural number,  *βασανισεις*. The understanding, judgment, will, memory, imagination, and all his passions and appetites, must be wrecked with regret, anxiety, self-reproach, fear, terror, anguish, confusion, horror, and despair! This was his general state; but what were the particulars comprised in it?

1. He sees Lazarus clothed with glory and immortality. This is the first circumstance in his punishment. What a contrast! What an ardent desire does he feel to resemble him, and what rage and despair, because he is not like him! We may think it strange that the gulf of perdition should appear to have been in the vicinity of paradise; and that beatified spirits and reprobate souls should have a distinct view of each other; and to relieve ourselves from an embarrassment which is the result of prejudice, we may cry out, "These things are not to be *literally* understood;" but we must take care not to apply the attributes and relations of time to the eternal world; for as the measurement of time is lost in endless duration, so all ideas of relative distance are absorbed and lost in infinite space. Disembodied spirits may have a power of perception and discovery, which, in this state of existence, even our conjectures cannot reach; and for aught we know, their sphere of vision

may be extended almost infinitely. If we, without even the assistance of a telescope, can see a planet at 900,000,000 of miles' distance, or one of the fixed stars, at a distance the computation of which is almost beyond the powers of arithmetic ; and if, when assisted with telescopes, we can penetrate some hundreds of millions of miles farther, can it appear to us an incredible thing, that disembodied spirits should discover each other in the eternal world, where even impediments to natural vision cannot exist ?

It appears then that reprobate souls can see the blessed in their state of glory, and we may safely conclude that this discovery, accompanied with a conviction that they themselves might have eternally enjoyed that felicity, from which they are now, through their own fault, for ever excluded, will form no mean part of the punishment of the damned. This appears to have been a first source of torment to the rich man.

2. He appears to have had the most ardent desire either to possess good, or have his miseries alleviated. He cried out, and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy upon me !" There was a time in which he might have prayed to the God of Abraham, and have found mercy : now he dares not approach that God whom in his lifetime he had neglected ; and he addresses a creature who has neither power nor authority to dispense blessedness. This is the only instance mentioned in Scripture of praying to saints ; and to the confusion of the false doctrine that states it to be necessary and available, let it be remembered, that it was practised only by a damned soul, and that without any success.

The cry for mercy is proper in the mouth of every sinner, who must be saved by the mere compassion of God, or perish for ever. A self-righteous man may so far impose upon himself while in life, as to imagine he

has deserved something from God ; but this refuge of lies will sooner or later be swept away, and the doctrine of human merit be exploded, even in the gulf of perdition.

The rich man is tormented by a sight of the happiness of the just, as well as by a sense of his own misery. The presence of a good, to which he never had any right, and of which he is now deprived, affects the wretched less than the presence of that to which he had a right, and from which he is now eternally separated. Even in hell a damned spirit must abhor the evil by which it suffers, as well as the evil of suffering, and desire that good which would free it from its torment. If a reprobate soul could be reconciled to the anguish of its feelings and the horror of its state, its punishment would of course be at an end. Milton puts a sentiment of this kind in the mouth of Satan—

“Farewell remorse ; all good to me is lost ;  
“Evil, be thou my good.”

PARAD. LOST, book IV., l. 109.

If a damned spirit can suspend the influence of remorse, receive evil in the place of good, and esteem it as such, then its misery terminates ; and if Satan has been able to realize what the poet has said for him above, then though devil damned, he ceases, even in the abyss of perdition, in the burning pool which spouts cataracts of fire—he ceases, I say, to feel torment ! But all this is only a flight of lawless fancy ; for eternal truth has said, “Their worm (remorse) dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.” An eternal wish to escape from evil, and an infinite desire to be united to the Supreme Good, the gratification of which is for ever impossible, must make a second circumstance in the misery of the lost.

3. The remembrance of the good things possessed in

life, and now to be enjoyed no more, together with the recollection of grace offered or abused, will form a third circumstance in the torments of the ungodly. "Son, remember, that, in thy lifetime, thou didst receive thy good things." It certainly was a very common opinion, in ancient times, that those who enjoyed much temporal felicity, could never enjoy eternal blessedness ; and on the other hand, that those who passed through much misery on earth, should be compensated with the ever-during enjoyments of heaven. To this opinion our Lord seems here to refer ; and it is certain that there are multitudes of Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, which appear to speak a similar language. Earthly possessions are not less dangerous than precarious ; they promise much, though they perform nothing ; yet as these promises still keep up the expectation and increase the desire, the soul is diverted from seeking its rest in God ; for rich men think they have reason to believe, that their wealth will secure them all possible happiness in this life. The poor cannot have this expectation, as there is nothing to support it ; therefore, in times of distress, affliction, and want, they are obliged, if they seek at all, to seek in God that happiness which they find their circumstances will not permit them to expect in life. As the gospel promises innumerable blessings to those who believe, they, pressed with want and distress, are glad to embrace it, while the others are too busy or too happy to obey the call of God, or seek that salvation, the want of which they scarcely ever permit their souls to feel. O how deceitful are riches ! Ye who possess them, hold them with a trembling hand ; for all that you have received, you must give account to God. Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Draw out your soul to the hungry ;

be, to the utmost of your power, every poor man's friend ; and do not starve your own souls, and pamper your flesh, lest you should once hear to your eternal dismay, "Remember that in your life-time you received your good things."

4. But privations of good, and recollections of past enjoyments, together with the earnest, though fruitless desire to escape from coming evil, and to enjoy a present good, will not form the whole of the punishment of the ungodly ; for, added to these, we find present, actual torment in the burning gulf, "I am tormented in this flame," ver. 24. The torments which a lost soul must endure in a hell of fire, will form, through all eternity, a continual present source of indescribable woe. Sinners may lose their time in disputing against the reality of hell-fire, till awakened to a sense of their folly, by finding themselves plunged into what God calls "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." But let them consider, that whether the words are to be taken figuratively or literally, the punishment they point out is awful, horrible, and real, beyond the power of language to describe, or thought to reach.

5. The well-known impossibility of ever escaping from this place of torment, or of having any alleviation of their misery in it, forms a fifth circumstance in the punishment of ungodly men. "But besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed," ver. 26. This is the most horrible circumstance of all to the damned, that they never can be delivered from this place of torment. The sovereign purpose of God, founded on the principles of eternal reason, separates the persons, and consequently the places of abode, of the righteous and the wicked, so that there can be no intercourse. "They who wish to pass hence to you cannot, neither can



they cross over who would come from you hither." Happy spirits cannot go from heaven to alleviate the miseries of the wretched, nor can any of the wretched escape from the place of their confinement to enter among the blessed. For though from the reasons alleged under the first article, there may be a discovery from hell of the paradise of the blessed ; yet there can be neither intercourse nor connexion.

On this circumstance Abraham appears to lay great stress, and therefore he emphatically adds, *Και επι πασι τούτοις*, but "above all other considerations," this is the chief reason, the grand irreversible decision, "a great gulf is placed between us and you." Lightfoot has sufficiently proved, in his *Horæ Talmudicæ*, that the ancient Hebrews believed that paradise and hell were so contiguous, that the respective inhabitants could plainly see each other. In the ancient Greek mythology, Tartarus, the place of punishment, and Elysium, the habitation of happy spirits, were represented as in the vicinity of each other, but separated by the rivers Cocytus and Phlegethon, in the latter of which ran a ceaseless stream of liquid fire. The original word *χασμα* signifies literally an immense gulf or chasm in the earth, without bottom, and which swallows up and renders invisible whatever falls into it. Some of the ancients considered this as the place of torment. Plutarch, in his *Treatise on the Demon of Socrates*, gives a description of this place in the vision which Timarchus had at the cave of Trophonius : "Looking downward he perceived a great gulf (*χασμα μεγα*, the very words of the text), round, resembling a sphere cut through ; terrific, horrible, and deep, full of thick darkness, not quiet, but turbulent, and oftentimes belching up ; whence might be heard myriads of groans, and roarings of living creatures, cries of multitudes

of children, mingled with the lamentations of men and women, with noises and tumults of all descriptions,"\* &c.

What a horrible place to spend an eternity in ! and yet the scriptural account of hell is far more terrific. But as the term is here used to signify the place that separates paradise from perdition, we must consider it not only as a real line of demarcation, by which the limits of the place of torment and the place of blessedness are designated, but also as pointing out the impossibility of the restoration of the wretched, and the impossibility of the lapse of the blessed. In a state of probation men may stand or fall. Time is the state of probation to human spirits ; in eternity their state is fixed. Those who are faithful unto death shall receive the crown that fadeth not away. They ended their state of probation in the salvation of God, and are now irreversibly fixed in the state of glory. These cannot possibly fall, because their state of probation, in which alone defection was possible, is eternally terminated. The others fell in their state of probation, and rose not again ; therefore they are consigned to an eternal separation from God ; for as their time of probation is ended, consequently their state is irreversibly fixed. The great gulf, says Abraham, *εστηρικται*, *established*, *made firm* and

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\* Κατω δ' απιδοντι φαινεσθαι ΧΑΣΜΑ ΜΕΓΑ στρογγυλον, οιον εκτετμημενης σφαιρας, φοβερον δε δεινως και βαθυ, πολλου σκοτους πληρες, ουχ ησυχαζοντος, αλλ' εκταραττομενου και ανακλυζοντος πολλακις : οθεν ακουεσθαι μυριας μεν ωρυγας και στεναγμους ζωνων, μυριων δε κλαυθμον βρεφων, και μεμιγμενους ανδρων και γυναικων οδυρμους, ψοφους δε παντοδαπους, και θορυβους, κ. τ. λ.

PLUTARCH. de Genio Socrat., p. 663, Edit. Xyland, 1574.

*durable*, and now there is no more hope ! It was the opinion of Origen of old, and has been the opinion of many since his time, that the great gulf would be abolished ; and that in process of time, damned spirits should be emancipated from the chains of darkness and perdition. This opinion was grounded on the supposition that suffering tends to purify and expiate ; that all punishment is emendatory, and that it is not likely that God should punish men eternally for those faults which they had committed in time. Leaving the nature of sin entirely out of the question, as well as the justice of God, we must consider that the final separation of an unholy soul from God, is a necessary consequence of the state in which it is found. For as it is unholy, it cannot be united to God, because God is holy. If then it cannot be united to him, it must be separated from him ; and as he is the fountain of happiness, to be separated from him is to be separated from happiness, and consequently to be in a state of misery. The perdition, therefore, of ungodly souls is not so much an effect of the vindictive justice of God, as a necessary consequence of the unholy state in which they are found at their departure from the body. If it be possible for them to grow holy in hell, of course they may at last be capable of endless union with God. But suffering cannot produce such a change, because suffering is an effect produced by sin, and it is physically and morally impossible that an effect should destroy the cause by which it is produced. Reprobate souls suffer only because they are sinful ; and while sin remains they must suffer ; and as suffering, which is an effect of sin, cannot destroy its producing cause, so misery must continue, unless their guilt be pardoned, and their nature be made pure. But there is no direct evidence from Scripture that ever this will be done, and therefore no solid ground to support a

sinner's hope, that he shall ever be permitted to cross this great gulf, and enter into the abodes of the blessed. It would be easy to strengthen these observations with other arguments, but they are waved, because not arising out of the text. We may therefore safely conclude, from the evidence afforded in the Sacred Writings, that a consciousness of the impossibility of ever being freed from the gulf of perdition, must form another circumstance in the torment of the lost.

6. The recollection that their bad example and influence have perverted others, and brought them into the same ruin with themselves, must be a source of misery to the ungodly; for according to the requisitions of justice, a man should suffer for the evil, and in proportion to the evil he has done to others. "Send Lazarus to my father's house, to testify unto my five brethren, that they come not into this place of torment," ver. 27, 28. "A rich man," says Father Quesnel, "by leaving his relatives an example of an effeminate and voluptuous life, and likewise riches to enable them to imitate his example, leaves them two means of damning themselves, and is punished in hell for so doing. For one part of damnation consists in being exposed to the reproaches of those whom we have loved in an improper manner, and thereby made companions in our misery." His brothers had no doubt been influenced by his example, and led to content themselves with an earthly portion, and thus forget their immortal souls. Probably they did not credit the soul's immortality, for there is some reason to conjecture that this rich man had been a Sadducee, and believed neither in angel nor spirit; but now, being convinced of his destructive mistake, he wished his brothers to be informed also, and thinks nothing so likely to convince a Sadducee of his erroneous opinions on this subject, as the mission of a disembodied spirit from the realms of blessedness :

“Send Lazarus—for if one go to them from the dead they will repent,” ver. 30. To this Abraham answers, “They have Moses and the prophets,” ver. 29 ; which plainly intimates they were all Jews, whether Pharisees or Sadducees, and had, or might have, the Sacred Writings in their hands ; but we find they did not permit them to influence their hearts, nor regulate their conduct. Whatever evidences God may be pleased to give men of his will, so perverse is the human heart, they still seek more. Proofs of the truth of divine revelation are furnished in abundance ; but what are proofs to inattention and obstinate unbelief ? It is not proofs that are wanting, but rational faith to receive them. After Christ had, in the most unequivocal and incontrovertible manner, manifested his eternal power by his miracles, the Jews came, saying, “Master, we would see a sign from thee.” Rational faith finds itself fully satisfied with the proofs which God has already given. Infidelity never has enough. But if men hearken not to Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one came to them from the dead, ver. 31. This assertion of Abraham contains two remarkable propositions :

1. That the Sacred Writings contain such proofs of a divine origin, that though all the dead were to arise to convince an unbeliever, the conviction could not be greater, nor the proof more decisive from such evidence, given in the most unequivocal manner, than that which may be derived from a careful attention to Scripture itself.

2. That in order to repent for sin, find the favour of God, escape endless perdition, and get to the realms of glory, a man must receive the testimonies of God, and walk according to their dictates. And from these two points the sufficiency and perfection of the Sacred Writings, must be, and have often been demonstrated.

What influence could the personal appearance of a spirit have on an unbelieving and corrupted heart? None, except to terrify it for the moment, and afterwards to leave innumerable reasons for uncertainty and doubt. On this subject an eminent philosopher and divine thus speaks: "Were God to evoke any of the dead from the other world, it is demonstrable that infidels could not receive any additional conviction from even this new mode of proof. This is no paradox; and one decisive proof of its truth is, that such an apparition would require a whole series of principles and consequences to render it credible. It would be liable to difficulties more numerous and more powerful than those which can be urged against revelation. It would be first necessary to prove that the person who professed to see this spirit was in his right mind; for it might be considered as the effect of a disordered brain. It would be necessary to examine whether that object came really from the other world, or whether it were not an imposition practised for the purpose, by the knavery of some head of the party, whose interest it was to keep up the deception. But supposing that this were no illusion, it would be necessary to examine whether this spirit were really sent by the Lord, or whether it did not come from the enemy of our souls, to entrap our innocence, and raise scruples in our minds, under pretence of leading us into the truth. Lastly, allowing the apparition to be real, we should inquire whether it be not an effect of God's judgment, who, as a punishment for our obstinacy and disobedience, may permit a strong delusion to induce us to believe a lie. These, and a thousand other questions of a similar nature, might arise on the subject, which would require more time, liberty, and talents, satisfactorily to answer than most men are capable of bestowing. How true then is the saying, 'If they hear not Moses and the

prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' ”\*

Christ caused this to be exemplified in the most literal manner, by raising Lazarus from the dead. And did this convince the obstinate and unbelieving Jews? No. Why? Were not the evidences clear enough, and the circumstances sufficiently attested? They were incontrovertibly so ; and yet so far were the Jews from believing, that they became more enraged ; and from that hour conspired against the life both of Lazarus and Christ !

After all, many are desirous of *seeing* an inhabitant of the other world, or they wish to *converse* with one to know what passes there. Curiosity and infidelity are as insatiable as they are unreasonable. Here, however, God steps out of the common way to indulge them. You wish to see a disembodied spirit ! Make way ! here is a damned soul, which Christ has evoked from the hell of fire ! Hear HIM ! Hear him tell of his torments ! Hear him utter his anguish ! Listen to the sighs and groans which are wrung from his soul by the tortures he endures ! Hear him asking for a drop of water to cool his burning tongue ! telling you that he is tormented in that flame ; and warning you to repent, that you come not into that place of torture ! How solemn is this warning ! How awful this voice ! “ But where is he ? We cannot see him ! ” It is true you cannot see him ; God in his mercy has spared you this punishment for the present. How could you bear the sight of this damned spirit ? Your strength would be dissolved, and your nature fail at the appearance. To alarm, to convince, and to save you if possible, the merciful Christ keeps him, as it were, behind the veil, and holds a conversation with him in your

hearing ; a conversation which you have neither faith nor courage sufficient to hold with him yourselves. And now that this awful conversation is ended, permit me to re-assert, that if you hear not Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, you will not be persuaded even by the heart-rending and soul-appalling accents of this reprobate spirit, who has spoken to you from among the dead.

From what has been said, we may draw the following inferences : 1. The *poor* and the *rich* meet *together*, and God is the Maker of *both*. It is as much through the appointment of his wise and gracious providence that one man is deprived of the necessities of life, as it is that another enjoys affluence. He who has assigned the bounds of their habitation has also determined the proportion of earthly good which each shall enjoy. The poor is in the state best for him ; the rich is where he may have every opportunity of saving his soul, and honouring God with his substance. If each improve the advantages of his situation, the result will be his own eternal happiness and God's glory.

2. That the *end* of *all things* is at hand ; the end of all the temporal *evil* endured by the *godly*, and the end of all the temporal *good* possessed by the *wicked*. The rich need not exult in his possessions, for he shall soon leave them ; and the poor need not murmur because of his afflictions, for they shall soon terminate. Every state is sanctified to a man, if he devote himself to God in it ; and then all occurrences shall work together for his good.

3. That *riches* generally are a *snare* ; not necessarily so in themselves, but because men are so prone to rest satisfied with earthly good, and to forget their souls, while it is in their power to gratify their sensual appetites. Therefore he who possesses them should hold



them with a trembling hand, and live under the constant influence of self-denial, lest the portion God has given him in life be all the good he is to receive to all eternity. Men often, by their perversity and attachment to sensible things, provoke divine justice to poison their enjoyments, and to curse their blessings.

4. That they who *live in pleasure* are *dead while they live* ; a voluptuous life is not only unfriendly to the interests of the soul, but absolutely precludes the possibility of salvation. Had the rich man in the text not indulged his appetite by his daily sumptuous fare, his stupid soul might have at last hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and been eternally satisfied with God as its portion.

5. That however innocently a man may have lived here below, he cannot expect to be saved, if he have not made God his portion, and been useful in his generation ; the rich man is tormented in yonder flames, not because he was a monster of iniquity, for even the Judge of quick and dead lays not this to his charge ; but because he lived a godless, useless life. He received a large portion of God's property, a sufficiency of which was allotted to himself, and the rest was intrusted to him for the benefit of the poor ; but in faring sumptuously every day, he neglected to make himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; and when he would have done it, it was out of his power. Let no man therefore neglect to do good, while it is in the power of his hand to do it.

6. He that *humbleth* himself shall be *exalted*, and he that *exalteth* himself shall be *abased* ; the afflicted pious *beggar* is raised from the dunghill, and set among the princes of God's people ; while the ungodly *rich man* is thrust down into hell. How true is the saying, " Riches profit not in the day of wrath !"

7. That when a man dies, his state is irreversibly

fixed ; and as no man knows what a moment may bring forth, all should prepare to meet their God. The means of salvation are in every man's power ; they have Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, let them hear them. The general voice is, he who confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy ; he who believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life ; but he that believeth not shall perish.

Reader ! death approaches, eternity is at hand, and the judge is at the door ! Thou shalt speedily be numbered with the dead ! Hast thou forsaken thy sin, and repented of thine iniquity ? Hast thou found redemption in the blood of the New Covenant ? Can thy heart rejoice in hope of the glory of God ? Art thou a lover of money ? of dress, high living, and worldly honours ? Then the love of the Father is not in thee ; and if thou die in this state, because thou hast neglected a great salvation, because God is just, and thou art guilty ; because he is pure, and thou art unholy ; and because no human spirit can ever find happiness but in union with God, the fountain of it, and thou art unfit for that union, because unlike thy Maker ; therefore thou must perish ! But thou hast yet a little time ; the day of probation is not yet ended ; thou art still within the reach of the utmost salvation of God. Hear the groans of this damned soul, and be alarmed ! Hear the merciful voice of the Lord Jesus, and be encouraged. Cast aside thy sins, come unto him, and believe on his name, and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life !

*Manchester, Nov. 27, 1803.*

## SERMON XLV.

### A DISCOURSE ON NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.\*

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DAN. ii. 41—45.

41. "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42. "And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43. "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45. "Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

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\* This discourse is to be found in Dr. Clarke's notes on the Holy Scriptures, at the close of the second chapter of Daniel. He had, however, delivered it in the pulpit previously to its insertion there. In a note in the possession of the writer he remarks, "This is the sermon which I preached at the City Road, on the Missionary Anniversary."—EDITOR.

THE kingdoms of Israel and Judah, after a series of the most unparalleled ingratitude and rebellion against displays of mercy and benevolence, only equalled by their rebellions, were at last, according to repeated threatenings, given over into the hands of their enemies. The inhabitants of the former country were subdued and carried away captives by the Assyrians; and those of the latter by the Chaldeans.

The people of Israel never recovered their ancient territories, and were so disposed of by their conquerors that they either became amalgamated with the heathen nations, so as to be utterly undistinguishable, or they were transported to some foreign and recluse place of settlement, that the land of their residence, though repeatedly sought for and guessed at, has for more than two thousand years been totally unknown.

Judah, after having been harassed by the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and others, was at last invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; Jerusalem besieged and taken; and Jehoiachin the king, who had before become tributary to the Babylonians, with his mother, wives, officers of state, and chief military commanders, princes, and mighty men of valour, to the amount of ten thousand; and all the artificers, smiths, &c., to the number of one thousand, with all that were fit for war, he carried captives to Babylon; leaving only the poorest of the people behind, under the government of Mattaniah, son of the late king Josiah, and uncle to Jehoiachin; and having changed his name to Zedekiah, gave him a nominal authority as king over the wretched remains of the people. Zedekiah, after having reigned nine years, rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who, coming against Jerusalem with all his forces, besieged it; and having reduced it to the last extremity by famine, and made a breach in the walls, took the city, pillaged and destroyed

the temple by fire, slew the sons of Zedekiah before his face, then put out his eyes, and carried him bound in brazen fetters to Babylon ; 2 Kings xxiv. and xxv. Thus the temple of God, the most glorious building ever laid on the face of the earth, was profaned, pillaged, and burnt, with the king's palace, and all the houses of the Jewish nobility, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar, the first of the forty-eighth Olympiad, the one hundred and sixtieth current year of the æra of Nabonassar,—four hundred and twenty-four years, three months, and eight days, from the time in which Solomon laid its foundation stone !

In the same month in which the city was taken, and the temple burnt, Nebuzaradan, commander-in-chief of the Babylonish forces, carried off the spoils of the temple with the Jewish treasures, and the principal part of the residue of the people, and brought them also to Babylon. And thus Judah was carried away out of her own land, four hundred and sixty-eight years after David began to reign over it ; from the division under Rehoboam, three hundred and eighty-eight years ; from the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, one hundred and thirty-four years ; in the year of the world three thousand four hundred and sixteen ; and before the nativity of our Lord five hundred and eighty-eight.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, A.M. 3397, B.C. 607, Nebuchadnezzar having besieged Jerusalem and made its king tributary, carried away a number of captives, and among them was the prophet Daniel, then in his youth, who became, for his wisdom and knowledge of future events, very eminent at Babylon, and, with some other Jewish captives, great favourites of Nebuchadnezzar the king ; who made Daniel president of all the wise men of his city. It was in the second year of this king that a circumstance occurred

which, though at first it threatened the destruction of the prophet, finally issued in the increase of his reputation and celebrity.

As prophecy is one of the strongest proofs of the authenticity of what professes to be a Divine Revelation, God endued this man with a large portion of his Spirit, so that he clearly predicted some of the most astonishing political occurrences and changes which have ever taken place on the earth ; no less than the rise, distinguishing characteristics, and terminations of the FOUR great monarchies, or empires, which have been so celebrated in all the histories of the world. And as the Babylonian under which he then lived was one of these monarchies, and was shortly to be absorbed by the Medo-Persian, which was to succeed it, he made Nebuchadnezzar, the then reigning monarch, by means of a most singular dream, the particulars of which he had forgotten, the instrument that appeared to give birth to a prediction in which the ruin of his own empire was foretold ; as well as other mighty changes which should take place in the political state of the world, for at least the term of one thousand years next ensuing. Nor did the prophetic Spirit in this eminent man limit his predictions with these, but showed at the same time the origin and nature of that fifth monarchy, which, under the great King of kings, should be administered, and prevail to the end of time.

The dream itself, with its interpretation, and the exact and impressive manner in which the predictions relative to the four great monarchies have been fulfilled, and those which regard the fifth monarchy are in the course of being accomplished, are the subjects to which I wish to call the reader's most serious and deliberate attention.

This image, so circumstantially described from the thirty-eighth to the forty-fourth verse, was, as we learn

from the prophet's general solution, intended to point out the rise and fall of four different empires and states ; and the final prevalence and establishment of a fifth empire, that shall never have an end, and which shall commence in the last days, ver. 28 ; a phrase commonly used in the prophets to signify the times of the Messiah, and in the New Testament, his advent to judge the world.

Before we proceed to particular parts, we may remark in general that the whole account strongly indicates :

1. The especial providence of God in behalf of the Jews at that time. For, although suffering grievously because of their sins, being deprived of both their political and personal liberty, God shows them that he has not abandoned them ; and the existence of a prophet among them is a proof of his fatherly care and unremitted attention to their eternal welfare.

2. The particular interference of God to manifest the superiority of his truth, to wean an idolatrous nation from their vanity and superstition, and lead them to that God who is the fountain of truth, the revealer of secrets, and the governor of all things.

3. The direct inspiration of God immediately teaching his servant things which could be known only to God himself. And thus showing the Babylonians that his prophets had spoken by an unerring spirit ; that the Jews were the depositaries of true religion ; that he was the only true God ; and as he was omniscient, so he was omnipotent ; and the things which his wisdom had predicted his power could and would accomplish.

The sum of the account given in this chapter is the following :

1. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the second year of his reign, about A. M. 3401, and B. C. 603, had a remarkable dream, which, although it made a deep

impression on his mind, yet on his awaking he found it impossible to recollect; the general impression only remaining.

2. He summoned his wise men, astrologers, &c., told them that he had a dream or vision, which he had forgotten; and commanded them to tell him the dream, and give its interpretation.

3. They request the king to tell them the dream, and promise then to make known the meaning. This he could not do, having forgotten it, yet he insists on their compliance on pain of death.

4. To tell the king his dream they find impossible; and a decree for the destruction of the wise men of Babylon is issued, in which Daniel and his fellows are included.

5. Daniel, hearing of it, speaks to Arioch, captain of the king's guard, or the royal executioner, desires to be brought before the king, and promises to tell the dream, &c.

6. He is introduced, and immediately tells the king what he had dreamed, and shows him its interpretation..

#### THE DREAM.

A vast image, exceedingly luminous, of terrible form, and composed of different substances, appears in a night vision to the king, of which the following is the description.

I. Its head was of fine gold.

II. Its breast and arms of silver.

III. Its belly and thighs of brass.

IV. Its legs of iron, and its feet and toes of iron and clay. While gazing on this image he sees,—

V. A stone cut out of a mountain without hands, which smites the image on its feet, and dashes it all to



pieces ; and the gold, and silver, brass, iron, and clay become as small and as light as chaff.

VI. A wind carries the whole away, so that no place is found for them.

VII. The stone becomes a great mountain, and fills the earth.

In order to explain this, certain DATA must be laid down.

1. This image is considered a political representation of as many different governments as it was composed of materials ; and as all these materials are successively inferior to each other, so are the governments in a descending ratio.

2. The human figure has been used, both by historians and geographers, to represent the rise, progress, establishment, and decay of empires, as well as the relative situation and importance of the different parts of the government. Thus, Florus, in the proœmium to his Roman history, represents the Romans under the form of a human being, in its different stages, from infancy to old age, viz. :

Si quis ergo populum Romanum quasi *hominem* consideret, totamque ejus *ætatem* percenseat, ut CÆPERIT, utque ADOLEVERIT, ut quasi ad quemdam JUVENTÆ florem pervenerit ; ut postea velut CONSENUERIT, quatuor gradus progressusque ejus inveniet.

1. *Prima ætas* sub *regibus* fuit, prope ducentos quinquaginta per annos, quibus circum ipsam matrem suam cum finitimis luctatus est. Hæc erit ejus INFANTIA.

2. Sequens à Bruto, Collatinoque *consulibus*, in Appium Claudium, Quinctiumque Fulvium consules, ducentos quinquaginta annos habet, quibus Italiam subegit. Hoc fuit tempus viris armisque exercitatissimum ; ideo quis ADOLESCENTIAM dixerit.

3. Dehinc ad Cæsarem Augustum, ducenti quinquaginta anni, quibus totum orbem pacavit. Hic jam ipsa JUVENTA Imperii, et quasi quædam robusta MATURITAS.

4. A Cæsare Augusto in sæculum nostrum, sunt non multo minus anni ducenti, quibus inertia Cæsarum quasi CONSENSUIT atque DECOXIT. *L. An. Flori* PROÆM.

1. INFANCY ; first stage—under KINGS, from Romulus to Tarquinus Superbus ; about two hundred and fifty years.

2. YOUTH ; second stage—under CONSULS, from Brutus and Collatinus to Appius Claudius and M. Fulvius ; about two hundred and fifty years.

3. MANHOOD ; third stage—the empire from the conquest of Italy to Cæsar Augustus ; about two hundred and fifty years.

4. OLD AGE ; fourth stage—from Augustus, through the twelve Cæsars, down to A. D. 200 ; about two hundred years.

Geographers have made similar representations. The Germanic empire, in the totality of its dependent states, has been represented by a map in the form of a man ; different parts being pointed out by head, breast, arms, belly, thighs, legs, feet, &c., according to their geographical and political relation to the empire in general.

3. Different metals are used to express different degrees of political strength, excellence, durability, &c.

4. Clay, earth, dust are emblems of weakness, instability, &c.

5. Mountains express, in Scripture, mighty empires, kingdoms, and states.

6. Stone signifies Jesus Christ ; Gen. xlix. 24 : “ From thence (of the posterity of Jacob) is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.” That our blessed Lord, the good Shepherd, John x. 11—17, is here intended, will appear most plainly from the following passages ; Isai. viii. 14 : “ And

he shall be for a sanctuary ; but for a STONE of stumbling and for a ROCK of offence to both the houses of Israel." Isai. xxviii. 16 : "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a STONE, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation ; he that believeth shall not make haste." 1 Pet. ii. 4, 6, 8, collate these with Ps. cxviii. 22 : "The STONE which the builders refused is become the head STONE of the corner." Matt. xxi. 42 ; Mark xii. 10 ; Luke xx. 17 ; Acts iv. 11, in which latter quotations the whole is positively applied to Christ ; as also 1 Peter ii. 4—8, "to whom coming as unto a living STONE," &c. ; who seems to have all the preceding passages in view. See also Isai. ii. 2 : "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains," &c.

7. This stone is said to be cut out without hands, ver. 34. Without hands, signifies that which is spiritual. So 2 Cor. v. 1, "A house not made with hands," means a spiritual building.

#### EXPLANATION.

The Chaldean empire, called the Assyrian in its commencement ; the Chaldean, from the country ; the Babylonish, from its chief city.

I. HEAD OF GOLD. This was the first monarchy, begun by Nimrod, A.M. 1771, B.C. 2233 ; and ended with the death of Belshazzar, A.M. 3466, B.C. 538, after having lasted nearly seventeen hundred years. In the time of Nebuchadnezzar, it extended over Chaldea, Assyria, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. He, Nebuchadnezzar, was the head of gold.

II. BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER. The Medo-Persian empire ; which properly began under Darius the Mede, allowing him to be the same with Cyaxares, son of Astyages, and uncle to Cyrus, the great son of Cambyses.

He first fought under his uncle Cyaxares; defeated Neriglissar, king of the Assyrians, and Croesus, king of the Lydians; and by the capture of Babylon, B.C. 538, he terminated the Chaldean empire. On the death of his father Cambyses, and his uncle Cyaxares, B.C. 536, he became sole governor of the Medes and Persians; and thus established a potent empire on the ruins of that of the Chaldeans.

III. BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRASS. The Macedonian or Greek empire, founded by Alexander the Great. He subdued Greece, penetrated into Asia, took Tyre, reduced Egypt, overthrew Darius Codomanus at Arbela, Oct. 2, A.M. 3673, B.C. 331; and thus terminated the Persian monarchy. He crossed the Caucasus, subdued Hyrcania, and penetrated India as far as the Ganges; and having conquered all the countries that lay between the Adriatic Sea and this river, the Ganges, he died A.M. 3681, B.C. 323; and after his death his empire became divided among his generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. Cassander had Macedon and Greece; Lysimachus had Thrace, and those parts of Asia which lay on the Hellespont and Bosphorus; Ptolemy had Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Palestine, and Cœlo-Syria; Seleucus had Babylon, Media, Susiana, Persia, Assyria, Bactria, Hyrcania, and all other provinces, even to the Ganges. Thus, this empire, founded on the ruin of that of the Persians, had rule over all the earth.

IV. LEGS OF IRON, AND FEET AND TOES OF IRON AND CLAY. I think this means, in the first place, the kingdom of the Lagidæ, in Egypt, and the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, in Syria; and, secondly, the Roman empire, which was properly composed of them.

1. PTOLEMY LAGUS, one of Alexander's generals, began the new kingdom of Egypt, A.M. 3692, B.C. 312; which was continued through a long race of sovereigns, till A.M.

3974, B.C. 30 ; when Octavius Cæsar took Alexandria, having in the preceding year defeated Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium, and so Egypt became a Roman province. Thus ended the kingdom of the Lagidæ, after it had lasted two hundred and eighty-two years.

2. SELEUCUS NICATOR, another of Alexander's generals, began the new kingdom of Syria, A.M. 3692, B.C. 312 ; which continued through a long race of sovereigns, till A.M. 3939, B.C. 65, when Pompey dethroned Antiochus Asiaticus ; and Syria became a Roman province, after it had lasted two hundred and forty-seven years.

That the two legs of iron meant the kingdom of the Lagidæ and that of the Seleucidæ, seems strongly intimated by the characters given in the text : " And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron. Forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things ; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise," ver. 40. 1. The iron here not only marks the strength of these kingdoms, but also their violence and cruelty towards the people of God. History is full of the miseries which the kings of Egypt and Syria inflicted on the Jews. 2. It is said that these legs should break in pieces and bruise. How many generals and princes were destroyed by Seleucus Nicator, and by Ptolemy, son of Lagus ! Seleucus, particularly, could not consider himself secure on his throne, till he had destroyed Antigonus, Nicanor, and Demetrius : and Ptolemy endeavoured to secure himself by the ruin of Perdiccas, and the rest of his enemies. 3. The dividing of the kingdom, the iron and clayey mixture of the feet, point out the continual divisions which prevailed in those empires ; and the mixture of the good and evil qualities which appeared in the successors of Seleucus and Ptolemy : none of them possessing the good qualities of the founders of

those monarchies ; neither their valour, wisdom, nor prudence. 4. The efforts which these princes made to strengthen their respective governments by alliances, which all proved not only useless, but injurious, are here pointed out by their mingling themselves with the seed of men. “ But they shall not cleave one to another,” ver. 43. Antiochus Theos, king of Syria, married both Laodice, and Berenice, daughters of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt. Antiochus Magnus, king of Syria, gave his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt : but these marriages, instead of being the means of consolidating the union between those kingdoms, contributed more than anything else to divide them, and excite the most bloody and destructive wars.

In chap. vii. 7, the prophet, having the same subject in view, says, “ I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and it had great iron teeth : it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.” And in chap. viii. 22 : “ Now that being broken (the horn of the rough goat, the Grecian monarchy), whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.” These, and other declarations, point out those peculiar circumstances that distinctly mark the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, and that of the Lagidæ : both of which rose out of the Macedonian or Grecian empire, and both terminated in that of the Romans.

2. These TWO LEGS OF IRON became absorbed in the Roman government, which also partook of the iron nature ; strong, military, and extensive in its victories : and by its various conquests united to and amalgamated with itself various nations, some strong, and some weak ; so as to be fitly represented in the symbolical image by feet and toes, partly of iron and partly of clay. Thus, as the

Lagidæ and Seleucidæ arose out of the wreck of the Grecian empire ; so the Roman empire arose out of their ruin. But the empire became weakened by its conquests ; and although by mingling themselves with the seed of men, that is, by strong leagues and matrimonial alliances as mentioned above, they endeavoured to secure a perpetual sovereignty, yet they did not cleave to each other, and they also were swallowed up by the barbarous northern nations ; and thus terminated those four most powerful monarchies.

V. "A stone cut out of the mountain without hands."

1. That Jesus Christ has been represented by a stone, we have already seen : but this stone refers chiefly to his church, which is represented as a spiritual building, which he supports as a foundation stone ; connects and strengthens as a corner stone ; and finishes and adorns as a top stone. He is called a stone, also, in reference to the prejudice conceived against him by his countrymen. Because he did not come in worldly pomp, they therefore refused to receive him ; and to them he is represented as a "stone of stumbling, and rock of offence."

2. But here he is represented under another notion, viz., that of a stone projected from a catapult, or some military engine, which smote the image on its feet ; that is, it smote the then existing government at its foundation, or principles of support ; and, by destroying these, brought the whole into ruin.

3. By this stroke, the clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold, were broken to pieces, and became like chaff which the wind carried away. Now, we have already seen that the Roman empire, which had absorbed the kingdoms of the Lagidæ and Seleucidæ, was represented by the legs of iron, and feet and toes of iron and clay : but, as we find that not only the iron and clay, but also the brass, silver, and gold, were confounded

and destroyed by that stroke, it follows that there was then remaining in, and compacted with the Roman government, something of the distinguishing marks and principles of all the preceding empires, not only as to their territorial possessions, but also as to their distinctive characteristics. There were at the time here referred to in the Roman empire, the splendour of the Chaldeans, the riches of the Persians, the discipline of the Greeks, and the strength of the Egyptian and Syrian governments, mingled with the incoherence and imbecility of those empires, kingdoms, and states, which the Romans had subdued. In short, with every political excellence it contained the principles of its own destruction; and its persecution of the church of Christ accelerated its ruin.

4. As the stone represents Christ and his governing influence, it is here said to be a kingdom, that is, a state of prevailing rule and government; and was to arise in the days of those kings or kingdoms, ver. 44. And this is literally true; for its rise was when the Roman government, partaking of all the characteristics of the preceding empires, was at its zenith of imperial splendour, military glory, legislative authority, and literary eminence. It took place a few years after the battle of Actium, and when Rome was at peace with the whole world, September 2, B.C. 31.

5. This stone, or government, was cut out of the mountain; arose in and under the Roman government; Judea being at the time of the birth of Christ, a Roman province.

6. It was cut out without hands: probably alluding to the miraculous birth of our Lord; but particularly to the spiritual nature of his kingdom and government, in which no worldly policy, human maxims, or military



force, were employed ; for it was not by might nor power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.

Two things may be here distinguished,—1. The government or kingdom of the Stone. 2. The government or kingdom of the Mountain.

1. The kingdom of the stone smites, breaks to pieces, and destroys all the other kingdoms, till no vestige of them remains, and till the whole earth is subdued by it.

2. The kingdom of the mountain fills and continues to govern all that has been thus subdued ; maintaining endless peace and righteousness in the earth.

First, The stone began to strike the image when the apostles went out into every part of the Roman empire, pulling down idolatry, and founding Christian churches.

Secondly, But the great blow was given to the heathen Roman empire by the conversion of Constantine just at the time when it was an epitome of the four great monarchies, being under the government of four emperors at once, A.D. 308 : Constantius, who governed Gaul, Spain, and Britain ; Galerius, who had Illyricum, Thrace, and Asia ; Severus, who had Italy and Africa ; and Maximin, who had the East and Egypt.

1. The conversion of Constantine took place while he was in Gaul, A.D. 312, by the appearance of a luminous cross in the sky above the sun, a little after noon-day, with this inscription, *Εν τούτῳ νικᾷ, By this conquer.* Euseb. De Vit. Const., lib. i., cap. 28. In A.D. 324 he totally defeated Licinius, who had shared the empire with him, and became sole emperor. He terminated the reign of idolatry in A.D. 331, by an edict, ordering the destruction of all the heathen temples. This made Christianity the religion of the empire.

2. The stroke which thus destroyed idolatry in the Roman empire is continual in its effects, and must be so

till idolatry be destroyed over the face of the earth, and the universe filled with the knowledge of Christ.

3. This smiting has been continued by all the means which God, in his providence and mercy, has used for the dissemination of Christianity, from the time of Constantine to the present; and particularly now, by means of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and its countless ramifications, and by the numerous missionaries sent by Christian societies to almost every part of the globe. Thus far the kingdom of the stone.

In ver. 44, the kingdom of the stone, grown into a great mountain, and filling the whole earth, is particularly described by various characters.

1. It is a kingdom which the God of heaven sets up. That this means the whole dispensation of the gospel, and the moral effects produced by it in the souls of men and in the world, needs little proof; for our Lord, referring to this and other prophecies in this book, calls its influence, and his gospel, the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven; showing thereby that it is a kingdom not of this world, not raised by human ambition, the lust of rule, or military conquest; but a spiritual kingdom, raised and maintained by the grace of God himself, in which he himself lives and rules, governing by his own laws, influencing and directing by his own Spirit; producing, not wars and contentions, but “glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, and good will among men.”

2. This is called the kingdom of heaven, because it is to be a counterpart of the kingdom of glory. “The kingdom of God,” says the apostle, “is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” Rom. xiv. 17; righteousness, without any sin; peace, without inward disturbance; joy, without any mental unhappiness. An eternity of righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy consti-

tutes HEAVEN ; nor can we conceive in that state any thing higher or more excellent than these.

3. This kingdom shall never be destroyed : it is the everlasting gospel, and the work of the everlasting God. As it neither originates in, nor is dependent on the passions of men, it cannot be destroyed. All other governments, from the imperfection of their nature, contain in them the seeds of their own destruction. Kings die, ministers change, subjects are not permanent ; new relations arise, and with them new measures, new passions, and new projects ; and these produce political changes, and often political ruin. But this government, being the government of God, cannot be affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed.

4. This kingdom shall not be left to other people. Every dispensation of God, prior to Christianity, supposed another, by which it was to be succeeded. 1. Holy patriarchs and their families were the first people among whom the kingdom of God was found. 2. Hebrews, in Egypt and in the wilderness, were the next. 3. Jews, in the Promised Land, were a third denomination. 4. And after the division of the kingdoms, captivity, and dispersion of the Jews, the Israel of God became a fourth denomination. 5. Under the gospel, CHRISTIAN is the name of the people of this kingdom. Everything in the construction of the gospel system, as well as its own declarations, show that it is not to be succeeded by any other dispensation ; its name can never be changed ; and CHRISTIAN will be the only denomination of the people of God while sun and moon endure. All former empires have changed, and the very names of the people have changed with them. The Assyrians were lost in the Chaldeans and Babylonians ; the Babylonians were lost in the Medes ; the Medes in the Persians ; the Persians in the Greeks ; and the Greeks in

the Syrians and Egyptians ; these, in the Romans ; and the Romans in the Goths, and a variety of other nations. Nor does the name of those ancient governments, nor the people who lived under them, remain on the face of the earth in the present day ! They are only found in the page of history. This spiritual kingdom shall never be transferred ; and the name of its subjects shall never be changed.

5. It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms ; that is, the preaching and influence of Christianity shall destroy idolatry universally. They did so in the Roman empire, which was the epitome of all the rest. But this was not done by the sword, nor by any secular influence. Christians wage no wars for the propagation of Christianity ; for the religion of Christ breathes nothing but love to God, and peace and good-will to all mankind. The sum of the gospel is contained in these words of Christ : “ God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life ;—for the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save.”

For his own cause, God fights in the course of his providence. He depresses one, and exalts another ; but permits not his own people to join with him in the infliction of judgments. It is by his own Spirit and energy that his kingdom is propagated and maintained in the world ; and by the same his enemies are confounded. All false religions, as well as falsified and corrupted systems of Christianity, have had recourse to the sword, because they were conscious they had no God—no influence, but what was merely human.

6. The kingdom of Christ breaks in pieces and consumes all other kingdoms ; that is, it destroys everything in every earthly government where it is received, that is

opposed to the glory of God and the peace and happiness of men ; and yet in such a way as to leave all political governments unchanged. No law or principle in Christianity is directed against the political code of any country. Britain is Christian without the alteration of her Magna Charta or her constitution. All the other empires, kingdoms, and states on the face of the earth may become Christian, and preserve their characteristic forms of political government. If there be in them any thing hostile to Christianity, and the peace and happiness of the subject, the *wind* of God—the Divine Spirit, will fan or winnow it away, so that no more place shall be found for it. But this he will do in the way of his ordinary providence ; and by his influence on their hearts, dispose truly Christianized rulers to alter or abrogate whatever their laws contain inimical to the mild sway of the sceptre of Christ.

7. And it shall stand for ever. This is its final characteristic. It shall prevail over the whole world ; it shall pervade every government ; it shall be the basis of every code of laws ; it shall be professed by every people of the earth. “The Gentiles shall come to its light, and kings to the brightness of its rising.” The whole earth shall be subdued by its influence ; and the whole earth filled with its glory.

8. The actual constitution, establishment, and maintenance of this kingdom belong to the LORD ; yet he will use human means in the whole administration of his government. His word must be distributed, and that word must be preached. Hence, under God, Bibles and missionaries are the grand means to be employed in things concerning his kingdom. Bibles must be printed, sent out, and dispersed ; missionaries, called of God to the work, and filled with the Divine Spirit, must be equipped, sent out, and maintained ; therefore expenses

must necessarily be incurred. Here the people now of the kingdom must be helpers. It is the duty, therefore, of every soul professing Christianity to lend a helping hand to send forth the Bible; and wherever the Bible is sent, to send a missionary, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, to enforce its truths.

9. The duration of the kingdom of the mountain upon earth.

The world has now lasted nearly six thousand years; and a very ancient tradition has predicted its termination at the close of this period. Its duration has been divided into three grand periods, each comprising two thousand years, which should be closed by a period without terminating limits; and these have been supposed to have their types in the six days' work of the creation; and the seventh day, called sabbath, or rest.

(1) There have been two thousand years from the creation without any written revelation from God;—this was called the patriarchal dispensation.

(2) There have been two thousand years under the law, where there has been a written revelation, a succession of prophets, and a divine ecclesiastical establishment. This has been termed the Mosaic dispensation.

(3) One thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven years have passed since the true epoch of the nativity of our blessed Lord; and this is called the Gospel or Christian dispensation, which is now within one hundred and sixty-three years of closing its two thousand!

According to the ancient tradition there were, 1. Two thousand years void, that is, without the law. 2. Two thousand years under the law. And, 3. Two thousand years under the Messiah. And at the termination of the third the endless sabbath should commence. The comments on this ancient tradition go on to state, that at the termination of each day's work of the creation it

was said, "The evening and the morning were the first,—second,—third,—fourth,—fifth,—and sixth day;" but when the sabbath is introduced, and God is said to rest from his work, and to have hallowed this day, there is no mention of the evening and the morning being the seventh day. This is left without termination; and therefore a proper type of the eternal sabbath—that rest which remains for the people of God.

And are we indeed so near that time when the elements of all things shall be dissolved by fervent heat; when the heavens shall be shrivelled up like a scroll, and the earth and all it contains be burnt up? Is the fifth empire, the kingdom of the stone, and the kingdom of the mountain, so near its termination? Are all vision and prophecy about to be sealed up, and the whole earth to be illuminated with the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness? Are the finally incorrigible and impenitent about to be swept off the face of the earth by the besom of destruction, while the righteous shall be able to lift up their heads with ineffable joy, knowing their final redemption is at hand? Are we so near the eve of that period, when "they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever?" What sort of persons should we then be in all holy conversation and godliness! Where is our zeal for God? Where the sounding of our bowels over the perishing nations who have not yet come under the yoke of the gospel? Multitudes of whom are not under the yoke, because they have never heard of it; and they have not heard of it, because those who enjoy the blessings of the gospel of Jesus have not felt (or have not obeyed the feeling) the imperious duty of dividing their heavenly bread with those who are famishing with hunger; and giving the water of life to those who are dying of thirst. How shall they appear in that great day when the conquests

of the Lion of the tribe of Judah are ended ; when the mediatorial kingdom is delivered up unto the Father ; and the Judge of quick and dead sits on the great white throne, and to those on his left hand says, " I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ! "—I say, How shall they appear who have made no exertions to tell the lost nations of the earth the necessity for preparing to meet their God ; and showing them the means of doing it, by affording them the blessings of the gospel of the grace of God ? Let us beware, lest the stone that struck the motley image, and dashed it to pieces, fall on us, and grind us to powder.

Bibles are sent out by millions into heathen countries ; but " how shall they hear without a preacher ; " and how shall they understand the things which they read, unless those who know the things of God teach them ? Let us haste, then, and send missionaries after the Bibles. God is mightily at work in the earth ; let us be " workers together with him, that we receive not the grace of God in vain. " He that giveth to those poor (emphatically poor, for they are without God in the world, and consequently without the true riches), lendeth unto the Lord ; and let him look what he layeth out, and it shall be paid unto him again. For " he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. " God does not call on *us* to shake hands with all secular, social, and family comfort ; and bid farewell to the whole, and go to the heathen with the glad tidings of great joy ; but he loudly calls on us to assist in sending those who, in the true spirit of sacrifice, the love of Christ constraining them, say, " Here are we ! O Lord, send *us* ! " Let those servants of God run to and fro, that by their ministry knowledge may be increased. Amen.



## SERMON XLVI.

### THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE.

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MATTHEW VI. 33.

“ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Every preacher of the gospel of the Lord Jesus feels it his bounden duty to insist on the absolute necessity of faith in Christ, as the evidence of salvation. The doctrine of salvation by faith we hear most of, and it is one we best understand. It is a mercy it is so. There certainly was a time when it was not well known. What were the doctrines substituted for it ? The sufferings of the body, and atonement made by certain portions of a man's property. Men supposed, when they had punished their bodies, and given a certain portion of their goods to charitable purposes, that thereby they had made an atonement for their sins : between the two, they endeavoured to hope their case was very good ; but how unavailing must all this be, in order to make compensation to God's infinite justice, we all know : for how can sufferings, which are the effects of sin, make an atonement for it ? or how can anything we possess, which belongs to God, and of which we are only the stewards, purchase his favour ?

Another subject our Lord strongly inculcates is, faith in God's government, or in what we term the providence of God ; and this appeared to our Lord so necessary, that the principal part of the sermon on the mount is on that subject. It is a subject not generally treated on, and a subject in consequence, we do not, in general, well understand : but it is a matter with which we should be well acquainted ; for our comfort, indeed, I might say our happiness in certain circumstances in life, depends upon a right knowledge of it.

There are certain times in which particular doctrines are more necessary to be treated on than others, and in the inclemency of the winter this doctrine appears peculiarly suitable.\*

The doctrine of providence is a doctrine frequently brought before our eyes, and we should learn to trust in that God, who governs all things, and manages all things according to the counsel of his own will. Providence has always the good of mankind in view. What is providence ? We must not confine it to what is called prescience, viz., God's foreknowledge of future events ; whether they are what shall take place, or what are poised between the possibility of being or not being, which are properly called contingent. The simple meaning of the word providence† gives a good notion of the thing—his seeing everything, and providing by his wisdom for every event. We learn that this word, properly understood, means God's management of the world ; that wisdom and knowledge employed for the sons and daughters of men. He knows our frame ; he knows what can take

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\* This sermon was preached, Jan. 7, 1815, in City Road Chapel, London.—EDITOR.

† See this defined and illustrated in a preceding discourse.—EDITOR.

place ; he knows the wants of all that exist in such and such circumstances. The Divine Being knows what shall take place, as he knows everything that can by possibility occur. He has, in infinite mercy, taken the future from man ; we see nothing of it : we have only conjectures which are founded on past experience : we have prudence ; prudence is that which directs a man to provide against possible evils and possible wants ; and we have hope for the future. Hope must have for its object something good ; and it is possible for that good to take place. Any man who considers the subject knows he is as capable of hoping good may take place, as of conjecturing evil may take place : and when he considers the subject, he sees those things he calls natural evils may almost universally be avoided. If he considers the being of God, that he is the fountain of goodness, and delights to do good ; he sees it is more likely that good may take place, than that evil shall take place : and when he considers his past life, that he has had a thousand days of health for one of sickness, he sees it is a thousand to one (when he considers what God has already done) of good coming to him than evil. This is the conclusion they come to, who seriously consider the subject. Those who do not devoutly consider it, are destroyed with continual apprehensions of evil. It is most evident that those who forget God's government of the earth, fixing their eyes on some particular evil, or on what may take place, will draw such a train after them that they will be miserable.

Turn your attention then to the bright side ; let your thoughts dwell upon the blessings you have enjoyed. Turn your eyes to the Divine Being ; he has made all things, and he preserves all things. The preservation of all things proves that God governs all, as creation is a proof that he has made all things. If we saw confusion

take place in the earth ; if we saw the laws of nature reversed ; if we saw a part of nature extremely active, and another part extremely torpid, we might take it for granted, God did not govern the world, but chance ; but we see the greatest regularity in the laws of nature, and this proves God is always at work. It is impossible for what we term general laws, to guide and govern the universe. God's providence is general ; it takes in all the inhabitants of the earth, giving laws by which all things are governed : but it is also particular ; it takes in the isles as well as the continents, the species as well as the genera, the individual as well as the family. The whole is composed of parts, and all generals of particulars ; therefore on a particular providence a general providence is built : and there can be no general providence without a particular providence, as there cannot be a whole without its parts. It is by a particular providence that God governs the world, notices the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads. The doctrine of God, on this subject, extends to the minutest things ; everything is under God's government, and nothing occurs without his permission.

Take all the laws God has fixed in universal nature, whether general or particular, and we shall find that no law can do anything of itself ; it is the ordinance or appointment by which God will act. The ordinance or appointment is nothing but as he will act by it. It is absurd to suppose any law will act by itself ; that a saw or an axe will cut or hew the timber without an arm to wield it. Wherever you see a spire of grass or an ear of corn, there is a particular energy that has produced that spire of grass or that ear of corn : that energy is God ; He who fills the heavens and the earth ; who is over all, and in all, and through all. Wheresoever we are, there is God. When we think of our own being

and our consciousness of that being, it ought to convince us of the presence and being of God ; for it would be impossible to have a being, or to exist, if God were not near to us, for “in him we live, and move, and have our being.”

When we consider God's love to man, his philanthropy, as manifested so graciously by his Son ; having sent his eternal Spirit to enlighten the minds of men—to change them into his own nature ; we can easily see that God loves man. Philanthropy, or love to man, is a character that God applies to himself ; yet how seldom is it put by a human being as one of God's attributes ! As he is the lover of the human race, his wisdom, kindness, and power will all be employed to do them good. We have said, we are assembled to ask everything requisite and necessary, as well for the body as for the soul ; and we cannot say God loves the soul more than the body. This has been said ; but I cannot see the reason of it. The body and soul form the human being. Jesus Christ assumed the body and soul of man : he took both into connexion with his infinite divinity ; both are equal in the sight of God—equally so, because they constitute the man. God is as solicitous to provide for the body, as for the soul of man : and when we look into his providence, we see much of it taken up in support of the body, and still greater wonders working in nature, in order to support the whole man. He works in a way we cannot comprehend ; nutrition is a subject he has never given light to a human being to fathom or comprehend : we cannot comprehend how it is that aliment taken into the stomach, is assimilated into our nature, so as to produce an essential part of man.

Having said so much on the general subject, I wish now to attend to what Jesus Christ says at the conclusion of the chapter. He warns men against *carking care* :

“I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on.” While we really believe these words of Christ, we shall find it, in all probability, very difficult to take them. Perhaps you say, we should qualify every expression. Do not say so. Jesus Christ just speaks as he would have you believe : when you understand his terms, you will find no difficulty in them. What does he mean to set before our eyes ? The all-sufficiency of God to help and save us. Cannot he help us ? Cannot he save us ? We can add, as God is infinitely wise, he sees what we have need of, to help and save us. Can he see things in a wrong point of view ? or can anything be hidden from him ? May we not add, that God is a God of infinite goodness : he is as good as he is wise and powerful. As he is almighty and omniscient, so he is infinitely good. We say this is necessary to the divine nature. He could not be happy himself, if he were not infinitely good. There is no attribute in the divine nature that is not infinitely good, therefore he must be in himself a fountain of infinite goodness. He knows all things, and can do what he will. And think you that God’s endless goodness can be less active or energetic, than his wisdom and his power ? You say he necessarily knows everything : I do not say so, nor can any man prove it.\* He knows what is necessary to be done, and he does it ; and he knows what is necessary to be known, and he knows it. He knows that the Spirit of life is necessary for your salvation, and he will

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\* This subject is entered into more fully by Dr. Clarke in his notes on the Holy Scriptures, Acts ii. *in fine* ; and his reasoning sometimes leads to conclusions, which to minds less metaphysical than his own, are scarcely warranted by the premises, and which he himself was studious to avoid.—EDITOR.

give you that Spirit. You know that he knows this is necessary ; and you believe he can do it if he will. Can you suppose that his goodness is less active in the accomplishing of any end, than his power, or his wisdom ? Does it not follow, as God knows what we need, and can give us what we need, he cannot be a fountain of eternal goodness, if he could withhold from us what we need ? When we consider that body and soul make that man God is said to be the lover of ; there is not anything necessary for the body or the soul, that he can withhold from us. He will not withhold from us any of the blessings he sees we want. Is it possible that the eye of God can behold wretchedness and misery ; can behold persons in distress, and not provide for them ? It is impossible. Take up things in this way, and you will find yourselves, as we term it, reconciled to God's dispensations of providence. "Reconciled !" I am sorry I am obliged to use that word ; I do not like it in the sense in which it is too often employed, in reference to the dispensations of God in providence.

Our blessed Lord gives us, in the verses I have read over in your hearing, several reasons why we should trust in Divine Providence ; why we should depend on him for what we want. You will observe, he introduces the holy doctrine of prayer. While he tells you to expect everything from God, he tells you, you must pray for everything to God. Do not take one part without the other ; otherwise, you sin against your own mercies. When you pray, leave it to God to answer prayer in that way most to his glory.

He gives us to understand that he gives us our life. "Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink." He has given you your life. What is this ? A thing of infinite moment. Life is the state of probation : that state in which God is to display

his richness of mercy in Christ Jesus, in the salvation of your souls. If he has given you your life, does it not follow, he intends to support that life? He has given you power to act, and taught you how to act, and to expect his blessing in every effort of honest industry. In order to be workers together with him, pray and work, and God will also work, and you shall have "everything requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." We shall see farther into this as we go on.

Consider how his providence acts for animals. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap." They have no storehouses or barns. Yet, behold how he feeds them. This is the way he intends to support them; providing for them day by day. But it is different with you. He has given you an understanding: this you must use; and, in exercising it, you must use foresight; and treasure up every providential indication.

But observe, my brethren, how unprofitable it is to be anxiously careful about worldly things. You say, how shall we get food and raiment? Just as you got them in your past life. We know, if a man laboured ever so hard and judiciously, and got ever so much money, if the providence of God did not provide food and raiment, his money would be useless. What would signify his money if God did not cause his sun to shine, to ripen the corn! He could not eat his money.

Perhaps we have found it difficult to get forward in life; and there are many who know not where the next morsel of bread is to come from. Many of the lower class of people are in this situation; yet they live as long as those who have millions; they are as healthy as those who have thousands: for one who dies of hunger, a thousand die of surfeiting.

"Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit



unto his stature ? And why take you thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow : they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or what shall we drink ?—But seek ye first the kingdom of God,” &c. Be not anxiously careful : give not way to carking care ; give it up at once, it can do you no good. After you have laboured and studied, and carefully thought to be workers with divine providence, it is perfectly unreasonable to distrust God. Every man must know that it is the blessing of God which maketh rich ; and if he has sought first the kingdom of God,—the salvation of his soul, he has a right to expect that blessing. Every man has a right, through Jesus Christ, to expect God will give him what he thus labours to provide for, viz., things honest in the sight of all men.

It is evident from the context, that a man with any religion, cannot give way to distrustful thoughts of providence ; “for after all these things do the Gentiles (or heathen) seek,” who have no proper knowledge of God, who have no trust in his providence, no knowledge of his grace. A man who acts in this way is like the heathen ; he acts as if there were no God ; or, if he believes there is a God, he does not believe he governs the world. But our religion has made us to differ from the heathen : it has taught us that God is a God of providence ; that he will supply our wants. We should make use of our creed, and apply it to all circumstances. Is our religion to do us no good in this life ? If it is to do us good, it must not be a theoretic but a practical religion.

Our Lord concludes, by giving us to understand the great business of life is to get safely through it, in order

to have life eternal. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Do you want a display of God's love to your souls? As you see you have no continuing city, therefore you should be always ready, lest you should be called rapidly out of life, and have no preparation for eternal blessedness. "Seek first the kingdom of God." What is this? We generally say, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, means the gospel dispensation. It sometimes does; but here it denotes the government of God in the soul of man: that is its meaning in this place, and its almost universal meaning. The kingdom of heaven is God's government of mankind,—God's government of the heart of man; and hence, St. Paul says, "It is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now, we know, in what is called the kingdom of glory, there is righteousness without any mixture of sin; so, if God establishes a kingdom in the heart of man, similar to that above, there must be righteousness,—freedom from sin; there must be happiness,—real happiness, arising from this,—a man having a consciousness of God's approbation. This is his charter from heaven. It is made over to man by his Maker. If this is to be received, if righteousness can be acquired in this world, and an end put to sin; if joy in the Holy Ghost,—joy produced by God's holy Spirit, and maintained by that holy Spirit, shall we not seek it? Yes, says Jesus, go seek it first, as your bodies live for the sake of your souls. Your body is wonderfully preserved, and amply provided for, by his providence; and his grace takes up the soul, and amply provides for it. If we find such a wonderful display made in providence, for the support of the body of man, can we suppose there can be a less provision for the soul? No, no; for he tells us he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather

he would turn unto him and live. He, in effect, tells us here, Get an indwelling God, and you will get everything necessary for the body—everything necessary for its support. “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Let us conclude this meeting, by taking a view of God's goodness, wisdom, and power. Let us take a view of God's goodness to man, considering that we ourselves are the objects of such goodness, wisdom, and power. Hitherto, he has kept and provided for us. We cannot say, we have lacked anything. Let us now come to our heavenly Father, and lay hold on every hope set before us in the gospel; and let us “cast our care on him, knowing that he careth for us.” Can we have access to him through the Son of his love? When we find he sanctified human nature by assuming it, we may surely come with boldness to the throne of his grace, that we may obtain mercy, and every other blessing that we need.

## SERMON XLVII.

### CONFIDENCE IN GOD, AND ITS REWARD.

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HEB. x. 35, 36.

35. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

36. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

I HAVE read part of the context that you may see the connexion in which these two verses stand, which I intend to make the principal subject of my address to you this morning. As they cannot be understood properly without being conferred with those that go before, I shall find it necessary to introduce them to your notice, because they contain the character and state of the people to whom these two verses were addressed. Much understanding of the word of God may be gained from considering the persons to whom that word was addressed, and the circumstances those persons were in at the time. Without this, it is impossible to understand many portions of the scriptures of truth. False meanings are commonly taken out of the sacred text, because this rule is not attended to. Let us, then, look at the state of the primitive Christians; I use this term not in the sense in which it is taken by some persons, who make a distinction between apostolical Christians, and

primitive Christians, as a distinction is made between apostolical fathers and primitive fathers. They call those apostolical Christians who lived in the time of the apostles, and were converted by their ministry ; and primitive, those who succeeded these apostolic men. I have not been able to perceive such a distinction here as to warrant its institution ; I therefore use the word primitive to point out both, the precise state in which Christians in the time of the apostles, and succeeding their time, were found.

We see one great truth everywhere in the books of the New Testament, that those persons who cordially embraced Christianity, and walked according to the dictates of the law of Jesus, were a proverb of reproach among men. It seems exceedingly strange, when we consider the subject, that this ever should have been the case. From the whole account of these men, we learn, not only that they were an innocent people, and a holy people, but a useful people. Whatever power and influence they had,—and really they possessed most extraordinary power and influence,—all these were used in order to promote the welfare of men. We learn from the Scriptures a second truth, that the design of Christianity was, to do good to man. These persons were saved from their sins ; and thus, being saved from their sins, they became a public and general blessing. Notwithstanding this, they were persecuted. In those early times, multitudes sealed the truth with their blood ; they counted not their lives dear to them, confessing the Lord Jesus at the hazard of their lives, and continuing faithful in their attachment to him and his cause unto death. From which we learn a third thing, that there was a power and influence in the Christian religion at that time, conveyed by that religion to the souls of those who cordially believed it, that made them happy ; that caused

them to rejoice in the midst of persecutions and tribulations; and which was so far superior to anything they could possess in the world, that they most cheerfully gave up all their earthly possessions, and even life itself, in order to retain that happiness which was communicated to the mind.

All these things have, no doubt, appeared plain to you, in recollecting the passages which have been read over in your hearing.

The apostle says, "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions. Partly,—whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." You will see from these words, without my attempting anything by way of illustration, a vindication in support of the remarks I have already made.

"Cast not away your confidence." To this, the apostle saw it necessary to call the attention of the church of Christ. By church of Christ here, I mean persons who were converted from their sins, who had received the truth as it is in Jesus, and made a public profession of Christianity; who acknowledge themselves bound to obey all the dictates, and walk according to the rule of the Lord Jesus.

You perceive that the persons who formed the church of Christ were persons whom the apostles considered, as long as they were in this world, in danger of turning aside from the commandments delivered to them. This may appear as strange as any other thing, when we consider that they had received such blessings from the hand of God, as caused them to consider everything under heaven as dung and dross. Yet such is the uncertainty

and fickleness of the human character, that these persons were in danger of forgetting the influence they had received, and of forfeiting their Christian privileges. We are *bound*, when we consider that ; and we may, properly speaking, place probation and trial in this : it necessarily implies, that the person tried may stand or fall. Everything here below bears the character of change ; a fixed state is to be found only in eternity. We need not wonder, then, at the apostle's advice ; he knew that these persons were liable to change, because they were now in a state of probation. All the exhortations,—all the entreaties,—all the counsels,—all the promises, and all the threatenings contained in this sacred book, are founded on this principle. I know not that there can be a doctrine more perfectly absurd, considering the state of things, than that man may arrive at a particular state in this world, either in reference to eternal blessedness, or eternal misery, from which he cannot change. It is most palpably absurd. The vilest of the vile may change, as long as he is in a state of probation. The holiest of the holy may fall, as long as he is in a state of probation. If it had in itself an irrevocable, fixed character, it could not be a state of probation. The fallen, therefore, may hope to rise ; and the man who has risen, and stands with his God, may have fear of falling.

Observe, again, the *persecutions* these persons were called to pass through, were exceeding heavy. They had reproaches and afflictions. What was the reproach to the primitive followers of Jesus Christ ? It was a most cutting one. You, who have not considered the subject in all its bearings, do not see it to be a reproach, because you live in a time when Christianity is generally esteemed. The reproach was this : “you pretend to expect an eternal heaven through the merit of the death of a

man, who was crucified at Jerusalem as a malefactor ; and in whose condemnation both Jews and Gentiles joined." Here was the reproach, and the great reproach of Christianity ; and it was the greatest reproach that the Jews and Gentiles produced against the followers of the Lord Jesus. It was that reproach which induced the apostle to say, in writing to one of the first cities of the Gentile world, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." They met this reproach with this most solemn and substantial challenge : let any man, Jew, or Gentile, who considers it a reproach to us, to expect salvation through him who was crucified at Jerusalem, read every account God has given him of these important transactions, and endeavour to credit these accounts, and with simplicity look to God for those inspirations of which we speak, and we rest the authority and excellency of the Christian system on this point. They will most certainly be convinced of its truth. This induced multitudes to make the choice, and there was not an unsuccessful one made in the whole primitive church. We do not find that either Gentile or Jew could come forward and say, "We, in simplicity, applied to God : we looked for those inspirations of which you speak : we looked for pardon, and its testimony, which you proclaimed : and we credited, as far as it was in our power to credit, the things as you repeated them, and we have received none of this bliss." There was not a man to state this. Search the Scriptures, examine the writings of those who succeeded the apostles, whether enemies or friends, and see whether you can find a single statement of this kind. There never was one on record.

But he tells them also, that they were *afflicted*. We have restrained the meaning of that word, to those suf-



ferings, which the human body undergoes ; that is generally termed affliction. Sometimes the word is applied to the man's personal sufferings, and sometimes in reference to the sufferings of others. Hence, we say, the man is afflicted in his family ; he has had sufferings, or death, among his children, and so forth. But the apostle's word takes in every kind of personal injury : they were persecuted, scourged, buffeted ; he tells us, they were made a gazing-stock. As the word literally implies, being exhibited upon a theatre, it has been supposed the apostle alludes to the custom of bringing Christians,—those found to be incorrigible,—and throwing them to the beasts, in what were called the public spectacles, for the amusement of the people in general. That some were thus treated we know ; for we have the most positive records to prove it. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was thus treated. You may see from this circumstance how much the Roman world,—the polite Roman world,—stood in need of those principles so promised in the gospel of the Son of God ; without which principles, properly received and applied, humanity has scarcely existed in the world, or can exist. It is only when they are received that human souls are humanized, and that man feels himself to be brother to man ; that human life is dear to him in every case, and this life can never be wantonly sported away. It leads him to do everything he can to promote and cherish the life and comfort of any of his brothers.

They proceeded farther than this ; they stripped them of the *comforts* of life ; they *spoiled* their *goods*.

Every man not possessed of this religion, felt himself justified to take away the property of a Christian. "He is a Christian," said they, "pull down his house ; seize his property. He is condemned by the state, as a Christian : it seizes his temporal possessions ; they become con-

fiscated ; they become lost to his family for ever. His goods and his chattels become the property of him who first seizes upon them." This the apostle calls the spoiling of their goods. The Christian was considered an enemy to his country, and to mankind, while laying down his life to defend both.

"Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." O look at the spirit of these men, and see, my brethren, what Christianity was ; and it is as unchangeable as the God who made it. What it was then, it is now, and must be, while God endures. Yes, see what it was. The apostle says, "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." I do not know that he could have made use of a term that more forcibly conveys contentedness to the will of God, and their contentedness to their lot, whatever that lot might be. To submit for conscience' sake, when his person was insulted, his body abused in various ways, without murmuring, without repining, without answering again, without stretching forth the hand of power to oppress the oppressor. This must be considered as a great thing, and would require a vast measure of what we call Christian patience. To find a man stripped of his goods, of all that he had in the world, so that there was no prospect of his life being preserved without a miracle, and to hear him rejoicing in all this ! Conceive, if you can, any consideration that could be derived from earthly things, which could have induced any man to rejoice in his being spoiled of everything so necessary for the comfort and support of life. If there had not been a sovereign influence accompanying to their souls the religion they had received, it was morally impossible, that any man could have rejoiced in being spoiled of everything he had necessary to the support of existence. Here we come to the point

we first referred to, and which we conceive is illustrated and proved by these words of the context, "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." Though we may safely infer, that the people were unspeakably happy in God. that they had a happiness beyond the reach of man ; I say, though we are authorized to draw this inference from what is before us, yet we are not left to induction altogether, in order to find the positive state of the souls of these men. "Knowing in yourselves," says the apostle, "you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Knowing in yourselves. Had he said, You know, from what we have declared to you, that the men who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, shall have a crown of life, he had said much then ; and taking it for granted, that the revelation came from God, and that all its words are true, they might safely have drawn this inference, and cheerfully have given up their temporal goods. But he does not tell us this ; but goes much farther. He tells us, they "knew in themselves they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." How elegantly, as well as heavenly, does this heavenly man speak ! He refers to the goods they had possessed, of which they were now dispossessed ; they had flitted away as a shadow. It did not seem good to the providence of God to work a miracle to prevent their being spoiled. But you have a substance ; you have it in eternal glory. You have it not in eternal glory merely, but you have it in your souls ; an evidence full in your own minds. The goods you have lost were perishing ; but you have in heaven an enduring substance. In this state, everything changes, and is liable to decay : but you are going to that place where there is no change, and where there can be no decay ; where the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ; where God

and everything in the eternity in which he manifests himself, is as eternal and immoveable as his own infinite unchangeableness.

We learn from this, that the Christians of these times had the strongest evidence of their acceptance with God, of the approbation of their Maker; the strongest evidence of their being on their way to God's eternal kingdom, and having a right to the inheritance of the saints in light. They might possess their temporal things, so as to lose eternal things; hence, says he, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." You have suffered much, you may be called to suffer more; your patient suffering is a proof of the grace of God that is in you. As the best soldiers of the Lord Jesus, he will put you in the state and place of the greatest danger and trial. "You have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you may obtain the promise."

My brethren, I stated some time ago that Christianity was the same still, and that it must necessarily convey to those who believe it the same privileges. They stand precisely in the same state toward God, and God toward them, in which those primitive Christians did. I might argue this at great length, from a great variety of considerations, derived from portions of God's word now before me; but is it necessary? I hope it is not. It would gratify my heart to enter into these truths, because I find them so strong. And if I thought there was a necessity for this, I would leave other parts of the subject to enter upon them; but you see them at once. If God designed the gospel as a scheme to save a fallen world: if he conveyed certain influences by the gospel of Jesus Christ, and fulfilled these promises to those that believed; and if mankind are in the same state at the present day, does it not follow that the same in-

fluences are necessary to recover man to the present hour ; and that they have been and will be necessary through the whole lapse of time ? If we do not grant this, we must infer that man needs not his God so much now as formerly. It would be a most difficult matter to prove this. He who would undertake it, would have need of all the subtlety, and powers of argumentation, that ever man possessed, and then we would demonstrate the contrary. If we find a nation comparatively reformed from what another nation is, who had not received the gospel of Jesus Christ, we ask, What produced this reform ? It is the Christianity that has been preached in it, that has been blessed to the people. And, my brethren, shall we say any doctrines, any systems of instruction, however clearly laid down, and accurately applied to the understanding, are capable of producing a moral change in the heart of man ? We all know that words never did this ; doctrines have no such power ; words and doctrines are of the same kind, to point out things, without reference to which things, these words and those doctrines have no meaning. We know the name *bread* never nourished a hungry stomach ; it is the sign of the staff of life. We know the word *mercy* never saved a soul since God made man ; but the thing which that word signifies, communicated to the soul of a sinner, saves him from his sins. We have heard, and we have read, that such and such doctrines are saving doctrines. No, they have no salvation ; they point out the means of salvation : but if we rest in doctrines and creeds, they are nothing, but as they lay hold of us. Do not then, my brethren, rest in these signs and tokens. You are not satisfied with this in civil life. Such and such things, you call signs and tokens of others ; but as signs and tokens, they are of no use in your estimation, but as they refer to substances. Then, my brethren, what produces good now, is not the

doctrine merely, but the thing contained in that doctrine. It is the plain, forcible preaching of Jesus Christ, that has been the means of our national reformation, which, thank God, is very great indeed. I know the nation better than most men in the nation ; I have so frequently travelled it over, and with my eye on the heart of man, so far as discovered in the life and conversation. I have marked it many years ; I have seen it in a low state, and I now see it in a state of great moral improvement. It is a widely different nation now from what it was forty years ago,\* when I could travel for a hundred miles without meeting with a person who feared God ; now you meet with such characters of all religious persuasions. So effectual has the preaching of the cross of Christ been, in calling people away from creeds to God, from the sign to the thing signified.

The apostle calls this “a confidence.” They had a confidence. You who have read the apostle, in the words as he wrote them, know that these words are used to signify liberty of speech, or freedom of access. It has been sometimes translated “boldness of spirit ;” but this, perhaps, is dangerous. The apostle refers to a custom in eastern monarchies, where a person, who was a special favourite of the ruler, and who was needful to him as a superior minister, in order to dispense his will to the people, had liberty of coming to him, and of speaking to him concerning what he saw wanting in the state ; and of receiving from him those concessions or advices necessary to be transmitted to the people. This man has the full confidence of his Sovereign ; he has

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\* This discourse was delivered, Feb. 18, 1818 ; and for thirty-six years at least, previously to this period, the preacher had been engaged in holding forth the word of life in different parts of the kingdom.—EDITOR.

access to him at all times ; in him, also, the Sovereign has the fullest confidence ; and of the sovereign's attachment to him he has the fullest persuasion ; his access is a proof of it. Behold, the God of heaven, who is seated upon the throne of his glory, calls men to appear before him. Here is the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity ; it brings God among men : the whole of it intimates that man is in commerce with his Maker—that God holds communion with man ; but mark, only with those who are saved from their sins ; those only who have cordially embraced the doctrines of the gospel, and followed on to know the Lord, can have the practical effect of believing. Pushing their principles to their extent, only such persons come into the presence of their Maker ; only such persons have freedom of access, liberty of speech ; only such persons come into the presence of God, and make known their wants, and the wants of the nations—the wants of the great human family ; only such characters become intercessors for the world. You have this confidence ; see that you retain it. You have this privilege ; forfeit it not. It is essential to your happiness ; if you retain it, you will be as a guardian angel, blessing the community where you live, in getting the blessing of God poured out on the people at large, in consequence of your prayers. Cast not that confidence away. Is it possible that you can forget that your spiritual life depends on your communion with him ?

You have said this morning, “We believe in the communion of saints.”\* What do you believe, in that communion ? Is it merely that the community is a sort of commonwealth in themselves, persons acquainted with

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\* The Church Service was read in the Chapel.—EDITOR.

each other? If you take it up in this sense, it is not one millionth part of its meaning. Many of you are saints, and know not one another. You who are METHODISTS, it is true, enjoy this communion in the highest manner in which it is possible to enjoy it on earth. Remember this, then; trifle not with this; hold this fast; your spiritual life depends upon it; your continual access to God will keep you in possession of this privilege. It is abiding in union with him that prepares you for the enjoyment of eternal glory. "As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches." As closely connected as the branch is with the tree, in order to its being a living part of that tree, so closely is the genuine Christian connected with his God, in order to his being a living soul. We are warranted to draw this conclusion, because of the metaphor which our Lord has used. He goes through all the metaphor, presses all its parts upon them, in order that man might see the doctrine he was teaching, and the blessings he was pointing out in that doctrine; the great blessedness of the reward.

There is a "reward" in holding it; the man who holds communion with his God lives happily and usefully. May you and I live no longer, than while we are striving to love God, and do good among men. Then, my brethren, you may have a compensation, whatever you may lose or suffer; but in the present state of things, you are not called to lose or suffer anything for the cause of Jesus Christ; for now we have a state of calm, in which we may receive much, and do much good. There is a compensation,—the increasing peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and soul through Christ Jesus. And then, look through that to the eternal world, where, at his right hand, there is



fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore. There is a heaven, whose glory, as we have never seen, we consequently cannot describe. "Eye hath not seen, or ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things laid up for them that love him."

You have need of patience ; you are variously tried. Satan will tempt you ; evil men will afflict you. Those who know not the God of this gospel may try, and variously try you : evil men of malevolent minds may put you to great pain ; your characters may be traduced ; your motives may be suspected. All this is possible ; but refer your case to the great God. A wicked man once said, "I never persecute a religious man ; I am afraid of the religious man ; because, if you do him any harm, he bears it patiently, and carries it immediately to his God. Then matters are completely changed ; the quarrel is no longer between me and that man, but between me and my Maker." You are authorised thus to act. Go with it to God. "Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest the way that I take ; see thou to it." Leave it there ; your God will take care of it.

Remember, in all this case there is his *will* to be done. What is his will ? What he has revealed. This is the will of God. I know many persons perplex themselves, and say, O that I knew the will of God ! Pray is there a Bible in your parish ? Is there no Bible in your house ? Why such language, if the Bible is at hand ? Here is the will of God ; and God has no will that respects your salvation that is not revealed in this book. Let no man pretend to say that God has a two-fold will with respect to man. How camest thou to know that ? has he told thee he has another will, besides that which he has revealed ? This is an abomination. If such persons had not to do with him whose name is mercy, and whose nature is love, that traduction of God's

eternal mercy would endanger to them their own salvation. What he commands thee to believe, believe by his grace. What he commands thee to do, do by his grace strengthening thee. This is the way ; walk thou in it, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul. His will is expressed in many places in a few words, and I shall quote one of them : "What does the Lord require of thee, but to love him with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself?" Here, then, is the will of God. If you love *God* with all your heart, search out his commandments ; live according to the prescriptions laid down here. Then, with respect to thy *neighbour*, if thou love him as thyself, he is bound to love thee as himself, and the obligation is universal. Let this principle be acknowledged, and what will the world be in a short time? A counterpart of God's eternal glory. We should then find the angelic song fully understood and acted upon, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-will among men!" Live in the love of God ; because whatever difficulties are in the way, the Lord will sanctify them to you. There is not an occurrence that is not under the government of his providence ; and wherever he is, he makes all things serve the purposes of his will. He makes all things work together for good to them that love him. Makes all things work together ! Thus, my brethren, we have a plain luminous path, in which we may walk ; and the farther we proceed, we have that heavenly light in increasing splendour and animating fervency. Our path shall be as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day. May the Lord give us this, preserve us in its possession, and take us to heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord ! Amen.

## SERMON XLVIII.

### THE GIFT OF A SAVIOUR THE FULFIL- MENT OF PROPHECY.

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LUKE i. 67—75.

67. " And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68. " Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69. " And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ;

70. " As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began :

71. " That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ;

72. " To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant ;

73. " The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74. " That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75. " In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

THE whole of this prophecy, as we all believe, is a direct revelation from God. We call it direct, because it was given for that very purpose, and for that very time : the person who received it not being one of those who was ordinarily under the influence of the divine

Spirit ; but at this time was chosen to communicate some of the most important news that ever reached the ears and hearts of mankind. It is said in the verse preceding these, that “Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying ;” and that it was of course through the influence of the Holy Ghost that he delivered what is here called a prophecy. And here the word seems to imply a declaration from God, concerning a thing he had done, was doing, and would do, for mankind ; but it contains nothing of the kind of what we call prophecy, in the common way in which we understand that term. There is no pointed declaration of future events, but a declaration of the manifestation of the power of God.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he has visited and redeemed his people.” The very first word here teaches us to know, that all the good we receive from God’s hand comes in the way of mere mercy. I do not see that man is called upon to bless God for anything he has a right to receive. When we receive from each other our food, for which we have given what is considered as equivalent, we do not conceive we are under any obligation at receiving what belongs to us. A debt owing and paid, the person who receives it has a right to it : the person who pays it is bound by law and equity to pay it. Whenever this term is used in the Sacred Writings, it always refers to the mercy of God. We bless him, because we receive from him what we have no right to expect : we are under obligation to his mercy, and acknowledge we can merit nothing at his hand. I have shown in a particular place that the term *to bless*, signifies in general, *to speak good of* ; though, when used in reference to God and man—man blessing God, and God blessing man, it is used in such a different way as to make a widely different sense. The term signifies to *speak to* or

*of* : as it belongs to God, it implies speaking good *to* man ; as it refers to man, it is speaking good *of* God. God is said to bless us when he speaks good to us, and does what he speaks : we are said to bless God when we speak good *of* God for the good he has done to us.

The next thing to be attended to in the verse is, the visiting which this prophet,—this person now under the divine influence, speaks of. “Blessed be God,” says he, “the God of Israel, who has visited.” It was always supposed among the followers of God in ancient time, that God never wrought where he was not. Wherever he was working, wherever there was manifested the *power* of God, there was the *presence* of God. It was not by mere omniscience, in what is called the heaven of heavens, that God produced effects on earth. And that is no sound philosophy that does not speak the same truth. We cannot suppose a power to produce effects at a distance, by any kind of thing we call sympathy : and hence, all God’s works imply God’s presence. This is one of the finest truths in the book of God. Wherever God works, there he is : the work discovers he is there. There is no place where the working of God is not in some way or other manifested. Then it follows, there is no place where God is not ; for wherever the work of God is, he is present : therefore, there is no space nor place where God is not present. It was ever supposed God never did good to man but by coming into connexion with him. Long before the world had any idea of God’s manifestation in the flesh, it was never supposed God saved us by a remote agency, or a volition of the divine mind at a distance. Hence, when the presence of God is spoken of, it always signifies an actual inspection ; a coming to the place, and examining what is there, and acting according to that examination. God, in condescension to man’s infirmities, is said to come to

the place to examine, and to act in consequence of personal inspection, and actual examination. It is impossible for us to think or speak about God, in his mode of action, unless we conceive of him from the mode of the actions we ourselves do, the expediency and necessity of them, and so forth. We may take it for granted God never did anything but in reference to these points. There is an expediency for the work, a necessity for the work, and an end worthy the employment of the power which he exerts: hence, all the works of God proclaim him in his wisdom, power, and goodness. All God's acts are formed this way; for this is true, "His eyelids try the children of men." We cannot conceive of his going from place to place to see the necessities of his creatures; being an infinite Spirit, he knows all things, and is ever doing what his wisdom and power prompt him to do. When he works among men, he works for men. We are not to suppose God is working for himself. An infinitely perfect Being can need nothing; an infinitely perfect Being can have nothing added to him: therefore, he cannot work for himself; for he can have nothing of glory, power, wisdom, strength,—nothing that is excellent, added to him. Rest assured all he works among men are for men, for their sake. If we find, in reference to man, all his works are beneficent, then we must conclude he loves man. The nature of his work is always good, always wise, and such a work as God alone can do. Everything called by the name salvation, and everything implied in the term salvation, always necessarily implies the presence of God, and none but that power which produced it. Hence, not only salvation in the general sense of the word, is the act of God, and can be performed by none but God; but everything implied in the work of salvation, is the work of God, and can be performed by no power but his own.

This word, "has visited his people," signifies he *inspects* their *state*. I know not that we can form a more pleasing idea of the Almighty than this. He is continually among you ; his eye is upon you ; there is no want of yours, no necessity of yours, he does not see ; there is nothing he undertakes that he cannot accomplish. He sees you stand in need of help, and he is inclined to accomplish the help you need ; not to communicate this or the other degree of mercy, or salvation, but just what you need—all you need—and when it is necessary : every saving act, and that saving act, when it is manifest you need it. Have faith in God in reference to this. God, in order to excite this faith, is pleased to shine upon the mind, to show man his need of salvation : when he sees he needs this, it is a proof God is visiting that soul, in giving it light to see its necessity. If it be true that he is always disposed to do us good, when good is necessary, and that he shows us our want, in order to supply that want, and does supply us when most to his glory, and that is, as soon as the want is known—being supplied as soon as it is manifested—then, our faith in God will find very little difficulty. God shows me I stand in need of help ; he shows me I am guilty, and stand in need of pardon. When will he pardon ? when I need it. Pardon is necessary now, for in a moment I may die ; then God will pardon me now. I am weak ; my enemies are strong ; God shows me my weakness, and apprises me of the power of my foes. That is a proof of his presence, and a proof that he is visiting me. When will God strengthen me ? When that strength is necessary for me. Now I am weak, and my enemies are strong ; and therefore, now it is necessary to be strengthened against my enemies, or they will prevail against me. God has visited me for this. I am unholy, and cannot love him with a pure heart perfectly. I am

convinced it is my duty so to do, and to do it at all times ; therefore, it is necessary to do it now. It is impossible to do this without succour from God ; and not only succour is necessary, but it is requisite, that I should receive influence from him ; for there is evil to be removed as well as good to be communicated. When is it necessary to be done ? It is necessary to love God at the present moment. As God shows me it is necessary at this time, he is waiting to supply it now.

This is a doctrine that has been preached among us from the beginning ; and I am glad, when examining all these doctrines with all the reason I have, to find them all capable of proof. There is not a flaw in them. There is not one but is capable of all the demonstration any truth is capable of.

God visits here, in order to redeem : He has visited and redeemed his people. There is a great difference between redemption and salvation. Redemption signifies the price paid down, in order to liberate captives : salvation, or liberation, is the act of restoring to liberty, bringing into liberty the persons redeemed. The redeeming acts of Jesus Christ are different from what are called his saving acts. All his acts of redemption we may consider as comprised in his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion, his precious death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and his all-prevalent intercession. These are the redeeming acts of the Son of God, but especially his passion and death upon the tree ; here is the grand redemption-price. Connect these two things together, and you will see what the prophet spake of, when he said, “ he has visited and redeemed.” God was not visiting in the ordinary manner, inspecting the state of his people. Here is an extraordinary visitation ; God becomes manifest in the flesh ; he personally visits mankind : he comes among us to



dwell among us. Here is the person who is called Immanuel—God with us—God among us. Here is a kind of visitation God had never favoured man with before. Perhaps every act of God, in reference to man, has an allusion to this personal visitation. “He has visited.” Jesus is about to be manifested in the flesh, to dwell among us: he is about to appear a man with men; about to show by his extraordinary working that God dwells with that man,—that no man, even God being with him, could do these miracles; for they are the work of almighty power. The works of Jesus Christ were of such a kind, that no man ever wrought such miracles, though God were with him. This visiting, then, refers to his incarnation: it connects itself immediately with redemption, referring to his sacrificial death; and thus states the broad question at once, in general terms. If we come with qualifications to a passage of this kind, and say he redeemed the persons already saved, or the persons who shall be saved, permit me to say, it does not seem to me, he speaks of this visitation at all: but he became flesh, that he might suffer and die for the sins of the world. He assumed human nature, that he might redeem that nature from eternal ruin. This is it that gives the foundation of hope—God manifest in the flesh. He took upon him this nature in order to save this nature—the whole human nature. All who partake of flesh and blood have a right to the Son of God: and the human nature he assumed, being the human nature in general, the redeeming acts were necessarily wrought in reference to this human nature. He took the nature of man, and redeemed man. Here is as actual a redemption as a visitation; that is, the price has been paid down not only for them that had existed, or that then existed, but for all that shall have existed at the consummation of all things. This very act, in a retrospec-

tive view, referred to all generations past, as well as to the generations to come. Hence, it is said, he was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” God conceived the design, and formed the purpose in reference to this.

Zacharias tells us he had spoken of this by the mouth of all the prophets; not by the mouths of the different prophets which have existed from the beginning, but by the *mouth*—the concurrent testimony, of all the prophets of God. It does not appear that these prophets were sent for any other purpose than this:—to testify, first, of Jesus Christ; secondly, of his redeeming acts; thirdly, of his saving power. These three acts I could make as clear out of the writings of the prophets, as I could make three out of two and one. God had in view these three points: first, his personal visit—he has visited; secondly, his redeeming acts—his sacrificial death; thirdly, his redeeming power—in justifying, sanctifying, and saving men. This that he speaks of, with regard to visiting and redeeming, was not only spoken by the mouth of all the prophets since the world began, but he had spoken in a particular way of these to his servant Abraham; for he tells us of the mercy promised to our fathers—a covenant and oath, by which God pledged himself to our fathers, and particularly to Abraham.

“To perform the mercy promised to our fathers.” You see, my brethren, when God speaks of this, he gives it its proper character. This visiting—this redeeming, was a mercy from God. A grand act of God’s mercy was to perform the mercy he had promised. The visit here spoken of was the design of God’s mercy. The purpose had been formed, particularly on this attribute of God, with the concurrence of every attribute in God; but as this attribute was the most prominent, it is

called the act of this attribute: "His mercy." All that is done for man is the consequence of the great conception of the Almighty's mercy, and is given to us by the hand of mercy, to hide pride from man, and give him eternally to feel his obligation to his Maker. Not only his mercy, but his covenant; and this covenant confirmed by a sacrifice. The sacrifice required the life's blood to be poured out in confirmation of the covenant. Between God and man there could not be a covenant without sacrifice: every agreement with God required a sacrifice; thus it is declared, there is no agreement with God but by sacrifice. All the sacrifices under the law pointed out the Son of God, till he came; hence the sacrifice, and the whole sacrificial system, referred to the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus. The covenant thus made by sacrifice always implied an agreement in consequence; it implied an agreement between God and man; and yet we know man in his sinful state is in a state of disagreement with his Maker. It is impossible that an agreement should take place between sinfulness and holiness; therefore, most demonstrably God intended to destroy this sin. It necessarily requires that holiness become unholiness, or that unholiness become holiness, and that the two principles unite together. The first is impossible, as to the Supreme Being; the latter only is possible: therefore this is the object of the covenant, thus made and ratified by an oath. God pledges himself. How?—"As I live!" "By myself have I sworn!" So sure as God lives, it shall be done:—as sure as he is a fountain of life, it shall be done:—as sure as all the life that is produced is from him, so sure this visit shall take place. Everything has been done in order to effect the salvation of man. As sure as God has sworn, so sure the visit has taken place. Jesus Christ was born,

lived, died, and rose again ; and from that time, and beyond it, God saves to the uttermost all that come unto him through Christ.

This prophet was enlightened by the Spirit of God to go more particularly into this subject ; therefore he says he has visited and redeemed his people by the covenant of mercy. The covenant was in reference to this end, the raising up a horn of salvation. This, as I before observed, is widely different from his redeeming acts ; this refers to the manifestation of his saving power. He hath raised up a horn of salvation. I need not wait here to explain the different senses (none of which contradict each other) in which the term *horn* is used in the Sacred Writings. The general meaning seems to be this : a principle of *power* or *strength*. You will always find another thing necessarily attaches to these—a power in actual operation—a principle of strength in efficiency. So here, he has raised up a horn of salvation, through a principle of power : he has raised up a principle of strength, and that principle is in a state of action. He not only works to show it is a principle of his own, but produces effects ; and these effects show of what nature the strength is. All this refers to Jesus Christ, in his manifestation among men ; not to the visiting, but to his continuing among men. It refers to this promise, “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world ;” and “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I.” We are informed that the power of God, where he is present, is present to *heal*.

A principle of power, of saving strength, is erected all over the face of the world ; but especially where two or three are gathered together for the purpose of worshipping God. What does man need ? Precisely the principle of power. Mark your own hearts ; examine your own way. You will find you are overcome with

weakness. You sin through weakness. It is strange we should rebel through weakness. This, at the first view of things, appears a contradiction,—that we should rebel through weakness. See a little child, when under the influence of an evil passion ; through that weakness it rebels against its parent. Our adversaries are strong, and we are carried by them against our will, because of our weakness. Why cannot you perform your duty as you ought ?—through weakness : and it is remarkable that very often God speaks of sin under this notion. He speaks of it as weakening the powers of the soul ; so that man is incapable of performing any righteous acts. But here is erected this Horn of power ; a principle of strength : it is a horn of salvation ; a principle of strength that saves. Grace, the grace received from the Lord Jesus, is a principle of strength by which the soul gets strength. Saving signifies delivering ; you know this well ; you understand it, when you use the term, that salvation signifies being redeemed from evil. This Horn of salvation delivers us from our enemies, and from them that hate us. The enemies we have are not of the common sort ; not enemies merely united under the direction of others to destroy, like the tribes of different countries, where there is no kind of enmity to one another, except under their respective leaders, by whom they are marched to destroy each other. The devil's hatred is not of this kind, but through fell malice. The devils hate ; they see that God has placed his love upon you—God has tasted death for you : they see his redeeming acts in order to save—they hate the place of blessedness to which you are called, and they cannot bear you should possess it. They have, most unfortunately for you, got you into their hands. You are in the hands of your enemies ; and who can deliver you ? Can you deliver yourselves ? No : there is not an evil

affection the devil has begotten in your heart that you can overcome. Then, by this saving power, you shall be delivered from the hands of your enemies; such shall not have dominion over you. You are thus delivered, that you may serve God,—serve him without fear, in righteousness and true holiness; and not only on solemn occasions (such as this\*), in the public assemblies, but all the days of your life, and all the hours and moments of which those days are composed.

I shall say but a few words on this, because more are not necessary. You are informed you are to be delivered out of the hands of your enemies, and them that hate you, and serve God without fear in righteousness and true holiness. It is remarkable, that while in a state of sinfulness, whatever views we have of God, it is impossible for us to love him, because we have in our own consciences a continual persuasion that we cannot be lovely in the sight of God, because we have done nothing but offend and grieve him; and therefore God is considered as our enemy. It is true, we say he is merciful; we are obliged to acknowledge that, in the preservation of our lives; but still we fear him, and we fear him, because we feel we have sinned; and we feel guilty because we have sinned. Some acts of a religious kind are performed through this principle. Through this fear of God, everything of a superstitious kind has arisen. Men doing acts in order to appease this God, who they thus supposed was angry with them. But it is said here, we shall serve him *without fear*—we shall have the principle of *love*: we shall love him, because he first loved us; and thus from this principle we shall obey God. What sort of service is that which is performed

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\* The text was taken from the second Lesson for the day, and the sermon preached, City Road, London, Feb. 18, 1816.—EDITOR.

through fear? How little is it worth, even from a child to its parent, or from a servant to his master? how little do we esteem the act of that child, or of that servant, when we know it is through a principle of fear? But when we find children or servants serve us because they love us, we attach a double value to those acts; we not only find the duty done, but in a way that cannot but please us. God promises—and it is none of his lowest promises—that we shall serve him without fear, have his love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and begin and end every work to his glory, from the affectionate view we have of him. It is said we shall *serve* him. As we have obeyed his enemies, in whose hands we were,—though not always with loving, but constrained obedience, being under the hand of power,—now we are to be brought from under this power, and placed under a different power, the power of God, and to serve him from a principle of love, and find our happiness in that service. Let no man say obedience is difficult; it is only difficult to him who does not love God. It is a pleasing path to him who feels love to God, because he finds God has loved him. When he knows he is of God, by the Spirit which he has given him, then he performs all his acts, all his *duties* (I do not much like that word), by performing them in the spirit of righteousness and true holiness. All his acts are right—all concurrent with the requisitions of divine justice—all holy—all in righteousness and true holiness. The *act* is not only righteous, but the *principle* is a principle of holiness. There is a great difference between a righteous act and a holy act. A man may perform a righteous act without the act being a holy act. A righteous act is a mere thing done in the mode or from the requisitions of justice. A holy act is that; but it is more; it is done through a principle of piety towards

God himself. Holiness is with the heart and affections ; righteousness is more with the act itself. Holiness has to do with the spirit in which that act is performed : a man may do a righteous work without its being a holy work. When holy in heart, everything is according to justice, and everything according to piety and love. The salvation provided by the Son of God, through his visit to mankind, is a salvation of the whole soul, and of the spirit of man. All his purposes, all his inclinations, everything is made holy. In consequence of being made holy, we serve God in righteousness and true holiness all our days. All this is to be done before God. I have already observed, that holy men of old ever supposed, where there was the work of God there was the presence of God : that it was not work performed by the volition of the Divine mind at a distance from where the work was performed. They had no notion of an effect produced without the presence of the cause. The effect and cause subsist together in the same place, and at the same time. He now pursues this idea ; it is taken up again. We are visited by him, that we may serve him in righteousness and pureness all our days. A man of God is ever in the presence of God. A genuine Christian ever remembers that the eye of God is upon him ; that he knows whatever is done, and sees all the motives by which he is influenced. He therefore begins every thing to God, and ends everything he is permitted to end in reference to God. Hence this man never loses sight of his God ; he keeps his eye upon that from which he derives his help ; and this, as I observed before, not only for a time, but all the days of his life. Thus we find that God's salvation implies a complete redemption of the man, putting him in a state of salvation, preserving him in that state of salvation, and enabling him to serve him at all times, in all places, and through



the whole course of his life ; because God would have man constantly holy in heart, constantly righteous in life, and constantly in the anticipation of heaven.

It is a kind of universal creed, "We only cease to sin, when we cease to breathe." It appears among all sects and parties. However they may differ on other points, they all agree in this, that man is redeemed from sin when he comes to die ; a subject on which the book of God is constantly silent. There is not a word about it ; and yet it is in the creeds of men as if it were prominent in every verse. In no verse does God promise to save man from his sins when he comes to give up the ghost. The Scriptures declare we are to be saved now. When the thing is necessary to be done, then God designs to do it, and requires to have faith in him to believe what he has promised. If, then, the loving God with all the heart, and serving him with the whole life, be every moment the duty of man, the design of God is to communicate that power by which the soul may be saved, that the thoughts of the heart may be cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that we may perfectly love him ; into which blessed state, may God bring us all for Christ's sake. Amen.

## SERMON XLIX.

### THE DOCTRINE OF HOLINESS.\*

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PSALM li. 10—12.

10. "Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me.

11. "Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

12. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit."

It is not possible to conceive anything more solemn or important than the consideration of a sinner bowing in the presence of his Creator and Judge ; and it is impossible to conceive any subject that can more deeply impress the heart, or interest all the feelings of the man

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\* This sermon was delivered in Lambeth chapel, August 11th, 1816, during the conference of that year, held in London. Though surrounded with Christian ministers, and many of them his juniors, and on an occasion too which would have been embraced by some men, and properly so, to give a little apostolic advice on the subjects of the ministerial character, and the ministerial office, yet there was nothing assumed in the way of dictation. But, designed or not, a fine example was exhibited in the preacher before his ministerial brethren, of the great subject which should ever be sounded forth from the pulpit, and fix the attention, and interest the heart

than this. It is a matter in which his present comfort and eternal blessedness are concerned. And we are **not** to suppose, friends, that these things are prime matters of consideration merely with such persons as are mentioned in this book, in their addresses to the throne of grace ; they are equally interesting to us : they concern us as much as they did them. We also may say, “ We have sinned, and come short of God’s glory. Against us, because of our offences, is the wrath of the Lord kindled : and it is impossible to expect comfort in this, or blessedness in another world, unless the fierceness of the divine justice is turned away from us.” We are not only interested to get our state changed, but our nature also. Having transgressed God’s law, it proves there is in us an evil principle, which has led us to transgress ; for the transgression of the law in the life is only the external manifestation of what is in the heart ; and, as man acts from inward feelings, an unrighteous act sufficiently ascertains an unrighteous principle.

We see that we are not only sinners, having broken the laws of God, but unclean persons ; we have been led to break the law through the influence of the evil that is in us. Consider the absolute necessity there is, that sin should be forgiven in order that we may not bear the punishment denounced against the transgressors of that law. There is also a necessity of having the heart purified, that we may be prepared to enjoy God in

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of the hearer. There were many topics which might have been selected, affording greater scope for the exercise of genius and the display of learning ; but all was preserved in abeyance to the more important consideration of pressing home upon preachers and people—the one directly, and the other by way of consequence, in the most unassuming manner, the necessity of entire HOLINESS. Here was a living model for the sons of Levi.—EDITOR.

glory through eternity. These two things should deeply impress, and ever occupy our minds. First, to get into the favour of God ; secondly, to abide in that favour, to receive the image of God, and to continue possessed of that holiness and purity, without which we can never see him in glory.

The verses which you have heard read contain these important points. In the Psalm is shown us a man in the presence of God, struggling for salvation, and wrestling with God for the redemption of his soul. It is very remarkable, so occupied was he with the state of his soul, that he makes no preface. He falls at once before his Judge, and his distress dictates immediately to him the prayer : “ Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness ; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.” We have often had occasion to remark, that the prayers mentioned in this blessed book are generally prayers without prefaces ; and very properly such, because they are ever the prayers of the heart ; and the persons represented as supplicating a throne of grace are thus represented, because they felt their need of the grace they thus requested to be communicated to them ; and as they knew that the object of their worship filled the heavens and the earth, they knew that where *they* were, *there was this* God. They lost no time in thinking how their cry could reach up into heaven ; they knew he was not far from any of them, feeling that in him they lived, and moved, and had their being. It is well to consider this in all our approaches to God ; it is well to consider it *now*. Remember the word, which says, “ Wherever two or three are assembled in my name, there am I.” It is an awful thing for a preacher to consider that he preaches before God Almighty, who tries the heart, examines the motives, acquaints himself with all the reason

ings of his soul ; and it is not less awful for the people to consider themselves in the presence of him who judges the heart. It is, however, encouraging, when they consider that he is amongst them to do them good. Do not forget this. My heart is not likely to forget it ; let not your hearts forget it.

Hear what the Psalmist says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." This psalm is a kind of general prayer, including many particulars which he afterwards mentions. His eye dwells upon his state, and affects his heart. He enters more particularly into his circumstances, and he offers to God the feelings of his own heart ; and doubtless, with a conviction, that God, who had produced the desire in his heart, was ready to satisfy that desire. He says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me." Does not the Psalmist refer to his *soul*, his judgment, understanding, and will, in the first clause ; and to his *affections* and passions, as being irregular, unholy, and impure in the second ?

I conceive him to have these two things in view : First, his mind, with its faculties and operations ; secondly, his passions, with their attachments and irregularities. We must always distinguish, when we come to look into our own hearts concerning the operations of what are called passions, and the operations of what are called the intellectual powers.

I shall not dwell much on this ; but the terms in the text sufficiently show us that the person who offered up the prayer was convinced that the whole state of his nature was out of its due course, and that his spirit was wrong. Hence, he says, "Create in me a clean *heart*, and renew a right *spirit* within me." Again, he might apply this, referring to the state of purity and holiness in which he was formed by God. He created man in his

own image and likeness ; and now, feeling that he is mis-created,—feeling he is what we call in our language (and very properly) a miscreant,—and convinced that the God that created him at first in righteousness and true holiness, can bring him back into that state ; and conscious that it is as great an act of almighty power thus to restore him, as it was in the beginning to make him ; hence, he says,—not a word to signify to mend or reform, but employs a word which expresses an act peculiar to the Almighty's power,—“Create in me a clean heart.” By this expression he shows us, that the thing which he expected to be done for him could be done only by the living God.

I suppose I need not stop any time here to inquire into our original creation. There are very few that come forward in any very direct or systematic way, in our day, to contradict the doctrine common in the church of God, and in the mouths of all taught of God, in all ages of the world—that man is not *now* what God made him ; that he is fallen, and not merely *that*, but particularly, that he comes into the world with a perverted nature. It is in vain to dispute against this, there are so many millions of facts to prove it : there is not a man on the face of the earth that is not a proof of it ; and the man who rises up to oppose it gives one of the most convincing proofs of the truth of it. It is impossible that an infinitely righteous and holy God could have made the soul as it now appears. And when we know that man is an effect of the great first cause, that he derives his body and soul from God, and that God can make nothing opposed to his own nature ; and when we are informed that he intended to make man in his image and likeness, for it is expressly said, “Let us make man after *our* image ;” a proof that God intended so to create him, unless it could be proved that the intention of the

Almighty could be turned aside by some other consideration that occurred to the divine mind, and thus humanize the Divine Being, by showing him to be an imperfect being,—unless we can prove this, then the intention of God must have been fulfilled with respect to the creation of man ; as he intended thus to create him, thus he did create him.

We might have been at a loss concerning the meaning of those words, “the image and likeness of God,” if another inspired writer had not interpreted them. He tells us, the image of God consists in righteousness and true holiness, or the truth of holiness ; pointing out the principle that actuated all the powers of the human being. The effect of the working of that principle is always true inward holiness ; such holiness as comes from God himself ; a principle working in all the powers of the human mind, and a principle producing righteousness ; everything conformed to God’s will and nature ; for if the principle were a principle of true holiness, it is not to be conceived that that principle, being fixed in active powers (such as the powers of the human mind), could be quiescent ; therefore the operations of these powers must be regulated by it, and the effect must be, righteousness in our actions, according to the purity of God.

Not only must the mind have been made holy and pure, but all the lower powers and faculties ; for as the body came immediately from the hand of God, as well as the soul, there was nothing imperfect in the body, any more than in the mind. “He formed man out of the dust, and breathed into him the breath of lives.” God was the Creator of the one as well as of the other : the former manifested the skill of God ; the latter, his purity. The body was a proper place for the soul to dwell in. When we look into the body now, we find much to astonish us ; and the more closely we examine it, the more

we find to admire in the contrivance of it, and the wonderful wisdom which has adapted one part to another. Yet we find in this wonderful system, enough to convince us that it is not in the state in which it was made : for though we are not able, in many cases, immediately to detect the appearance of disease, yet it is evident, in human life, that there is the seed of evil in the body, which brings about death in various forms, and secures the accomplishment of that great purpose of the Almighty, expressed in those words, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." We see it is impossible for men to escape death. Death is an imperfection in the works of God, and disgraceful to the human being ; and I know of nothing more so, on this side of eternal damnation. It is a proof, then, that God's justice has assigned to it this period, and that God in the beginning could not have made this body with an intention thus to destroy it.

But when we look into the mind of man, we find more there to convince us of our fall and imperfection. We generally, when speaking of the soul of man, say, in it we mark understanding, judgment, and will ; and we say of the understanding, it is the place where the ideas are fixed ; of the judgment, it is a certain power by which man is enabled to determine about things presented to the understanding ; and of the will, it is another certain power by which man determined to act, in reference to what the judgment has decreed. I see something else in the soul of man, which may be properly called imagination ; the place where the images of things are first engendered, and from which the understanding receives those images. Now if this place, where the images or forms of things are engendered—the representation or the appearance of the thing itself ;



if this be disordered—if images are not fairly represented in it ; if it is in such a state that, when images are presented before it, they are transformed, then all becomes false ; and as we see in certain glasses, however beautiful the image may be that is presented before one of them, it is changed, and, appearing through them, the form is destroyed, the appearance is in nothing essentially like the image presented before it. Thus it is with every thing that passes into this power of the human mind : everything is distorted. We have not, except from the immediate influence of God himself, right images of any thing spiritual or divine presented before this power or faculty of the human soul ; or if any image correct and pure is presented before it, on being received, the image is distorted : hence, we find, there is not a correct notion of God in the universe, but what has been received from revelation, or from the influence of God himself. If it were possible for the mind of man to form correct views of spiritual things, one would have supposed this first would have been understood generally upon the face of the earth ; and that however mankind might differ respecting the worship of God, there would have been but one opinion concerning himself. Yet we do find, that in all the universe, previous to divine revelation, there was not a correct notion of God. Those who are best acquainted with the writings of antiquity know this truth : the notions concerning the Being from whom all other beings came were very confused and contradictory. We know there were the images, but when these notions passed into the imagination, they became distracted and distorted. Hence the endless forms of the Divine Being, which have been contrived by men, and set up as objects of worship : and we find among them, not only those forms which are most pleasing to man (as taken from

the best of his own species) but forms the most fantastic have been used to represent the Being of infinite perfection.

This has not been the case merely with heathen nations. When we consider ourselves, what strange notions have we formed of God. Till the time when divine light shone upon our minds, what did we know of God? What strange notions did we form of his omnipotence? How often did we seek for privacy to cover transgressions immediately against God's law! How often did we suppose, that though God was a witness of our actions, yet that he was so merciful, he would pass our transgressions by. Hence the mind became cold, and in consequence of this, it walked in its own darkness.

When we come to look into the understanding, we find it has given as little evidence of perfection as the imagination. What do we know? What do we understand from the things presented to us? Nothing, consequently, right. The result has been, that our whole conduct has been broken in pieces. When our minds appeared directed right, notwithstanding this, we have in a few hours taken a wrong path; the act has showed a contrary direction to that indicated in the beginning.

Look at the judgment; see how it has comported itself. We find light put in the place of darkness, and darkness in the place of light. We find that crooked has been called straight, and straight crooked; that wrong judgment has been formed in general. This has shown us, there was an obliquity which was not accidental, but had, in its nature, opposition to God. What we determined to do, was in general what God commanded us not to do. We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those which we ought to have done; and perhaps our judgments, in every instance, actuating us, because it determined con-

cerning the things as we practised them. Then the will comes in, to consummate the determination, by bringing it into action. When we consider the actions of the heart, all these were originally right;—the soul was helped by those meaner powers; but these are now out of the way; averse from those things which God has commanded us to be attached to. We have loved that which we should have hated, and hated that which we should have loved. We have feared where there was no cause for fear: and where there was cause, we have not feared. In short, wayward, and unholy, and impure has been the whole system of our actions and affections.

A man, looking into his soul, and by the light of God, seeing his sins, more enormous than tongue can paint them, would offer up this prayer: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Brethren, let us apply this prayer to our own hearts. What do your hearts feel that is honourable to God? What attachments have you? What affections springing up there? How have you glorified God? Do you feel power so to do? No: you feel a heart deceitful and desperately wicked. You have struggled, and found the struggle vain; still it was deceitful and desperately wicked. You have been sometimes so confounded at this, that you have despaired of heaven, because you found that you could not bring a clean thing out of an unclean. Have you not thought of God in this way? Yes, you have; you have thought of him as a loving God, and that he had a right to your obedience, to your affectionate obedience, which from you he has not received. Have you never in such a case thought of Jesus? Have you not heard that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life?"

Yes, you have ; but you have thought yourselves too vile, too unholy, to have part in his merits, or to attract his notice. Have you not heard that he died for sinners ? and have you not heard us prove, that he died for sinners of all kinds ? Have you not heard that he came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ? And have you not heard that word (may God write it on your hearts !), “He came to destroy the work of the devil ?” Jesus came to destroy that ; he came to counterwork the devil’s work : this is the meaning. The devil has been at work : Jesus came into the world to confound him. Satan has his foundation : Jesus came to destroy that, and to lay another foundation, and build you on it. All that the devil has laid, as a foundation, he comes to destroy ; to pull down, in order that he may build you up, as you were in the beginning, and make you a proper habitation of God through the eternal Spirit.

But you have thought again, you were too much perverted ; you felt the darkness of your understandings. The images which have been represented—the distortions of divine things when brought into the imagination, have sometimes struck you with horror, and you supposed, in consequence, that your case was beyond cure. Did you never consider the creative energy of God ; that he has all power in heaven and in earth ; that all other energies are inferior to his ; and that, if he undertook to counterwork any energy, it must be counterworked ? His power is the same as when he created you ; and though you are miscreated, yet the God of heaven can recreate you. And has not God produced in you the convictions you feel ? You see you cannot save yourselves, and you hesitate not a moment in saying, that no being that God has formed can change your mind—make your mind a right mind, and make your heart a right heart : then you are obliged to have recourse to God. But to be con-

vinced of his ability, would be small relief, if you could not see a reason why God should exercise his power to purify your soul, and forgive your sins. But this you can see, through the atonement made by Jesus Christ. Here is an infinite reason why God should do it: Jesus died for you. Here comes in now, the creative energy of God, manifested through Jesus Christ. God has showed you how you may come to get your impure heart cleansed. Come, then, through Christ. Offer up the sacrificial death of Jesus, as the reason why your impure hearts should be cleansed, why your unholy souls should be purified: and as you are led to depend on his almighty power, you will find that all things are possible to them that believe.

Here comes in the glorious conclusion, *We can be saved*; but saved only by the living God. We can be purified; but by no less a power than that which created the heavens and the earth. You know that power can create you anew; and you know, too, that the depth of your impurity is no argument, so long as the eternal mercy of God through Christ Jesus comes in. I wish this view were more generally received. I come to the Almighty God to be saved. I have this reason why I should come—Jesus has died for me: the depth of mine iniquity, or the greatness of my crimes, are no absolute reasons against pardon or purity, because the sacrificial death of Jesus has infinite merit, and power unlimited. Hence all the wretched arguments, that are brought against cleansing the soul from sin, are blown away by the Spirit of God, as is every other cloud brought by the devil, in order to obscure God's eternal mercy.

The Psalmist says, “Renew in me a right spirit;” or, as the margin reads, a *constant* spirit (the better word of the two). Give me a constant spirit; renew in me a constant spirit. My old spirit must be made new; mend-

ing will not do here ; improving will not do here. As there was a creation in the first case, there must be a creation in the latter case. The mind here is represented as old and worn out ; and so its operations seem to intimate ; it is incapable almost of anything. It cannot perform those acts which are proper for an immortal spirit. It is like an instrument out of tune incapable of doing the work it formerly was capable of performing. All is old and passing away. Jesus Christ comes in here. Fickleness is the character of man next to sinfulness. He is never at one stay ; if he is constant to anything in the world, it is to his unsteadiness to his own purposes ; full of good purposes to live to God ; changing these purposes almost immediately, and living to the devil ; forming friendships and alliances, which appear formed only to be broken ; hence, variations and contentions among men ; hence, the bane,—the curse,—the disgrace of human friendships ; the person, who was as our own soul by and by becomes hateful to us ; the same are we with respect to him, and so on. The Psalmist felt this, and prays to have a *constant* spirit. Let me have one that aims to please my God, and never loses sight of him. Let me have one that discerns the line which God himself has marked out for its walk ; a spirit which can at all times recognise three things : First, God, the object at which I must aim ; secondly, the SOUL, the great subject employed in aiming at God ; and thirdly, the LINE marked out by divine revelation, which leads to God, in whom the soul finds its rest.

Let us pray to God for this fixedness, and certainty of character. There was never a greater word used than that word : “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise.” It is a good thing that the heart be established by grace. He that can say his heart is fixed, and continues with his fixed heart to give

praise to God, is the man whose heart is created anew. He who has got an established heart has got it by the grace of God : it is only God's mere mercy in Christ Jesus, manifested to the soul of man, that can bring the heart into a fixed state,—a state of establishment. All is uncertain till that takes place.

He goes on, and says, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." He sees, that the state in which God had formed him, was a state of happiness ; it was impossible that a being formed in the likeness of God could be unhappy ; especially when we take into consideration that God having made us after his own image, necessarily implied that God was with that man, and in that man. The divine image was maintained in the soul by the continuing of God in the soul : the man, then, must necessarily have been happy. "Oh !" says he, "restore me this joy !" bring me again to this state of happiness. What is misery among men ? What is the universal misery ? The presence and operation of this most powerful cause—SIN. It is sin which has produced misery. There could not have been misery if there had not been sin. The misery of man is the sin of man ; and misery continues while sin remains, either in the power, or the in-being. To take away from man his mental misery,—the misery which affects his heart and harrows up his soul ; to take this away, the power of guilt must be broken,—the impurity of sin must be purged away. In short, the man, according to God's promise and purpose, must be created anew. "Circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation ;" not a new creature, or an universal change merely, but the whole must be recreated by the power of God. And then, says the Psalmist, "Uphold me with thy free Spirit." I am still as much dependent on his grace for the con-

tinuance of salvation, as I was on his mercy for the reception of that salvation; and it is here where the doctrine of perseverance is properly considered. We retain what we have received,—Why? By being upheld by the Almighty, we are kept in continual commerce with the Almighty.

We have, in this book, a number of instances mentioned, where persons who had enjoyed the favour of God apostatized, and died without any intimation of their being again brought into that favour. Read the fate of Solomon, and tremble! It is only by being created anew, by being brought into the image of God, by being filled with God, that we can have any expectation of persevering. It is only by being thus changed that we are brought into the way which leads to heaven; and it is only by being upheld by the free Spirit of God that we continue in that way; and we cannot be upheld thus except we abide in the truth. Hence the necessity of abiding in a state of purity; without this there is no hope of perseverance. Perseverance is a mere fable without it.

In reference to this, the Psalmist offers up that other petition, “Cast me not away from thy presence!” Let me never be out of thy sight. Let me walk with thee as Enoch “walked with God.” The heart seems to feel a kind of horror lest it should be cast out of his presence, where there is fulness of joy. He is not here speaking of a state of glorification, which some have supposed, but of the state of believers on earth.

And not only that, but says he, “Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” There may be cases in which we give cause for God to take away his Spirit, by leaving undone what we should perform, and doing what we ought to have left undone. There may be in me many things contrary to thy infinite holiness, but, O my God, “Cast



me not away from thy presence ; take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Hence, arise two important considerations : First, Man goes safely to heaven while he walks in the presence of God ; secondly, the man, to walk in the presence of God, must have the Spirit of God.

" Uphold me with thy free Spirit." The original word, which seems to be here used as a metaphor, signifies the shore or prop of a building. A building will stand a thousand years,—only shore it up. Here, a person feels he is nothing but what he is in his God ; that as all creatures are bent to destruction and decay, he shall fall if not upheld by his Maker. He, therefore, leans on his Maker, and leans confidently. " Uphold me by thy free Spirit," or, as some translate the word, " noble" (and very properly) ; " Uphold me by thy noble Spirit ;" for I am uncertain—fickle—vile, except as supported by thy divine Spirit. I have been base in sinning against my God, and putting earth in the place of heaven. I have debased myself. O my God, " Uphold me by thy noble Spirit ;" give me a spirit that will not condescend to sink into sin, that I may act up to the dignity I am called to,—receiving this image,—showing forth, by a holy life and conversation, in my views, objects, and pursuits, that which distinguishes the nobility and excellence of the Spirit of God. Amen.

# SERMON L.

## THE LOVE OF GOD TO MAN.

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1 JOHN IV. 8—11.

8. "God is love.

9. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

NOTHING can exceed the plainness of these directions : they are as simple as they can be ; and yet, on a subject the most important, the most extensive, the deepest that can possibly occupy the judgment, the understanding, or the imagination of man.

It is impossible to read, or hear the words read, without feeling them.

What is commonly called among Christians a heavenly unction, is felt especially on reading the works of this man, who seems to have breathed nothing but a spirit of love, and to have been filled with that great and holy God, whose love to mankind he so emphatically describes. If it had been left to a man, who had a general acquaintance with divine things, and a general know-

ledge of what may be called the perfections, because essential to an eternal Being, to have given us some word or sentence that could convey at all times to the mind satisfactory evidence of this being in relation to his nature, and the perfections of that nature, as they stand related to us, and we to them, I think he could not have thought of the word I read first to you in my second reading,—“God is love.” We should hardly have supposed that any term of this kind would have been sufficient to express the perfections, the essential perfections, of this Supreme Being. He would have taken, probably, the word infinite justice, or omnipotence, or omniscience, or omnipresence ; and would have thought, that, in making use of any one of these, he would have conveyed an idea of infinite perfections, producing the most deep and lasting impression upon the mind, considering the Being to which this was applied. But who would have supposed that the term *love* would have conveyed more than any one of these, or, perhaps, more than all of them taken together ? If I do not misapprehend it, it refers to every perfection of the divine nature ; the others are but attributes—essential to be sure ; they are, and can, be attributed to no being, that is not unspotted, and eternally perfect.

But do any of these, taken separately from the other, or from all the rest, give me a reason for obedience ? Do any of them give us particular confidence, that this infinite Being—this just Being—this infinitely holy Being—this powerful Being—this wise Being, could interest himself concerning us ? I do not think that this can be at all deduced from any consideration we can take of God’s perfections ; that is, under any one of these attributes.

I tremble before a God of infinite wisdom, because I know he knows me ; he knows what I have been, and

what I am,—my public haunts and my private ways. His infinite eye is at all times upon me. Thoroughly conscious of my weakness, I tremble before an infinite God. I find I cannot thunder with a voice like his; I cannot harden my neck against him, and hope for success; my arm is not like the arm of omnipotence: and my conscience tells me I have sinned against him. No consolation, then, can I draw from the simple idea, God is a being of unlimited power.

If I take up his justice, his holiness, or his truth, I am similarly circumstanced. From this God of justice what have I a right to expect? Justice: I do not say, without mixture of mercy; for I have nothing to do with mercy when I am considering God under this attribute. He can do nothing but justice as a God of wisdom; and this is nothing but right. If, then, this infinite justice of the Divine Being leads him to do that which is right, and that alone, as this belongs to an infinite perfection of justice, what have I a right to expect? What is due to me; what belongs to me; what I have deserved. If justice deal with me, I shall get no more than I have deserved; and from justice—infinite justice—I shall get no less. Where then is my consolation? I find nothing here upon which I can rest the sole of my foot,—no consolation. Let me look forward to the exercise of these attributes,—infinite justice,—unlimited power,—omniscience, and so forth, and I have only “a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” And my conscience will recognize me among them.

If I read merely of his mercy; if, in order to relieve me, a person comes forward and says, “But this God is merciful:”—I own it; he *is* merciful; mercy necessarily belongs to his nature. Considering the state of the world at present, and considering the state of intelligent

beings, I know that all have a derived existence from him ; even in the heaven of heavens, the highest archangel is dependent simply upon the ineffable, eternal mercy of the living God for the continuance of his being, and for all the blessings that render that being a well-being. But here, I feel but little ground to stand upon. How those who are living in continual sin and transgression against God, neither fearing him nor working righteousness, can deal with this attribute I cannot comprehend, when they are hoping all from it, and living in continual hostility to all the attributes—this, as well as the rest,—all the attributes by which God has made himself known to man.

But if I take up the simple account which this heavenly man has, under the plenitude of divine inspiration, left for my instruction and consolation, I see, that God can be just, and yet the justifier of a sinner. I find that notwithstanding I have sinned, and come short of the glory of God—notwithstanding God is infinitely just, and his justice ever requires him to do that which is right, and he will act according to the law of right ; for that is an emanation from his justice—and this is the public or external expression of his own infinite mind, though he be omnipotent, and can do whatsoever he will ; and omniscient, and has seen all that has been done against him, what is doing, and what is right to be done ; yet I see, on the ground that this man has laid down, I may expect his justice, his omnipotence, his omniscience, his holiness, his goodness, his truth, all mercifully to work for me, because I read he is love ; and because I read that he is not merely the great Spirit that inspires into the souls of men any benevolent affection they feel, anything of the law of kindness that flows from the lips, or that the hand evidences the heart hath received the impression of—I see that this God is not only the foun-

tain whence all that can be called rational or agreeable to the human mind or feelings, must necessarily come ; but I see that, through this, he has provided such a Saviour as is suitable to the state of a lost world : using the emphatic language of another apostle, such a Saviour as “ became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens : ” in opposition to our unholy, harmful, defiled nature ; having been sent to save us, though sunk as low as hell.

“ God,” says the apostle, “ is love : ” and herein is this love manifested. He would not have us look to the end merely ; though it is right to look in this way for anything that merits the name of love, and trace it to God as the fountain whence it has come ; but he would have us to look to this love, in what he calls, the manifestation of it here. “ God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”

It has been generally said,—and I believe I have often joined in it, because I had not properly understood the subject, though I hope, in God, I am better taught now,—it has been generally said, that we should not attempt to enter into deep considerations of the attributes of God, because they are all incomprehensible. My friends, these people who would persuade us to meet them on this foundation, are not aware that such assertions might be applied to everything that, properly speaking, falls within the range of human knowledge. I do not know any thing that I can comprehend. I have tried many things : I have never gone beyond them yet : I can comprehend nothing. I do not know whether there is an archangel of God that can comprehend anything ; that is, to take in the fulness, the infinite perfection, and endlessness of anything, and the whole design of God in having formed

it, so as to take the whole of this into his mind. This belongs to God alone. He alone can comprehend a thing, who could conceive the design of its formation ; and he who formed it must have reasons, infinite reasons, for forming it just as he has : he has infinitely glorious ends to accomplish by its formation ; and this God alone can comprehend. For infinite reasons, in reference to infinite ends must necessarily imply the comprehension of that existence : and this can alone be in an infinite or unlimited mind. But let not this excuse any inertness in our minds. Every man has powers, and he should use them. If I cannot comprehend all these things, or any of them, yet I can know them, and know them as far as necessary to my well-being : and I have a prospect of knowing them better, in proportion as I employ my faculties under the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God.

Then, I can know a great deal about omnipotence in the contemplation of objects that I refer to that contemplation. Though I cannot comprehend it, I can comprehend it as it regards myself, as it regards infinite justice, and wisdom, and truth. I can see this omnipotence implying all possible perfections, and according to the end contemplated : and so of all the other attributes.

Omnipotence : Contemplate all the power that can be conceived to exist ; that can possibly be conceived to be exercised, and even beyond what any human mind can conceive ; let us go any given lengths, we still may conceive ; for there is before us an infinity of longitude—there is before us an infinity of activities : and these things we cannot comprehend. But I can comprehend, there is a sufficiency of power to strengthen my weakness—of wisdom, to enlighten my darkness—a sufficiency of goodness, and mercy, and love, to save my lost soul. I can conceive, that, as far as sin has reached, so far can

God's infinite mercy go ; as wide as it has extended, so wide can this infinite mercy extend itself : however great my sins have been, this mercy is infinitely without and above all their guilt ; however deep my defilement may have been, I can see, that the infinitely penetrating holiness and purity of God goes deeper than all this. What need I more ?

Not to take these views of the subject would be sinful ; when we can take them, it must be exceedingly encouraging. I find many persons tied and bound by the chain of their sins ; let me say that God's infinite mercy would loose them, if they took that view of God that he has given of himself in his word. "God is love:" then he is a Fountain of eternal benevolence. "God is love:" then he is a Fountain of eternal beneficence. If we could in our minds analyze these terms, we should find that love—take it where you may—any thing that can be called by this name—is comprehended in these two, benevolence and beneficence ; the benevolence that wills well, and the beneficence that acts according to that well-willing.

We know these things are limited, according to human nature ; our benevolence may vastly exceed our beneficence, because we find the body is still more limited than the mind. Beneficence with us necessarily implies the employment of the members of the body, and the means which Providence may have placed within our reach, in order to operation ; and this necessarily must be limited, because the activities of the body, the energies of the body, are limited and evanescent (if I may use the term), in many respects : and the means that God has put into the hands of persons to exercise their beneficence are limited ; and we find them limited in almost endless gradations of proportions among the sons of men. But take with you anything that exists merely



in the soul, merely in the mind ; here are no limits. I declare I do not find any limits to my well-willing, to my benevolence : I can wish well to every creature the hand of God has formed ; and I should distrust my heart, and detest it as a scoundrel heart, if I found it was capable of willing evil to any creature that the hand of God had thought proper to produce, or bring into being, and maintain by his providential rule.

Apply this to God, and we find his benevolence must necessarily be infinite ; for every attribute that is essential to a Divine nature must necessarily partake of that which is essential to an infinite being ; it must be infinite, because unlimited. Look at his power. He can do whatsoever he will. We are limited in our actions, in our means, and in our powers : he is unlimited ; the heavens are his ; the earth also is his ; the cattle upon a thousand hills are his ; the gold and the silver are his : the earth and its fulness ; and the heavens and their fulness. When, therefore, the apostle tells you, in reference to your salvation, that “God is love,” he tells you that God wills well to you ; he tells you, that his eye will direct his hand, and he will work well for you. And you have the fullest proof possible for you to have, when he tells you he has manifested this, by giving his Son Jesus Christ for the life of the world ; that we might live through him.

After this you cannot doubt ; it is utterly impossible to doubt. Doubt must have some reasonable pretext to fix its hesitations upon ; but here is no reasonable pretext, therefore hesitation cannot be fixed upon it at all. If we only allow, that this man spake these words by the direct influence of the Eternal Spirit of God, we know the words themselves must be truth ; and whatsoever he hath spoken is perfectly right. Then the inference that has been drawn is correct, most perfectly correct ; for it

is impossible to overdraw an inference from premises of this kind, because these premises are eternal and infinite. And if this love, which he bestowed upon mankind, be an infinite and eternal love, then I am justified in inferring, that this great and good God, who has this infinite and eternal love to the children of men, will use his *power*—for this is the manifestation of his love, of his benevolence, to do me good.

When, then, he tells me he has love towards the children of men, I am not surprised at all, even at the most stupendous of all wonders, the incarnation of the LORD JESUS. I am not at all surprised that the Almighty's fellow has come down, and taken my nature upon him;—no, I am not at all surprised or astonished. I may be well astonished that God, who is infinitely perfect, and holy, and just, and good, should think upon men at all; but when I find he has set his heart upon them, when he assures me of this, I do not wonder at anything God has done afterwards; I do not wonder at anything he says he will do. I am sure everything may be inferred from this: “God is love”—an infinite fountain of benevolence to the children of men—an infinitely glorious beneficence, pouring out his blessings with an unceasing liberality upon the bodies and souls of men; causing “his sun to shine on the evil and on the good,” and sending his “rain on the just and on the unjust.”

But he tells you here—and this greatly heightens the consideration—that he has sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him. So it appears, then, we cannot live but through the Lord Jesus. Now this either implies that our being depends upon him as the fountain and author of life, or it implies that we are dying, and must have died, had it not been for his interposition. The first is certainly implied; we cannot live without God. There never was a truth taught by

philosophical science more correct than this, that “in him we live, and move, and have our being.” It is utterly impossible anything could exist but by the continual energy of the Almighty.

I have once asserted and proved, in my way, among you, that it requires precisely the same quantum of power to support creation (speaking after the manner of men), as to produce it at first; the same quantum of power must be exercised to produce the same or given quantum of these continued energies. When I see that a thing was produced by a certain cause, I know it must have required a certain series of these causes to continue this effect; and if I see that this effect is continued, I see then a continual exertion of this cause; and can easily understand from this consideration the meaning of these words, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” It requires the continual working of God to preserve that creation which he has made, in the precise order and arrangement in which he first made it.

I cannot see any specific determinations of granulations of matter to concrete together, so that an oak shall precisely spring from an acorn, and that the acorn shall be produced from the oak only; and that there should be such determinations and concretions of matter, so as to produce the fibre of the oak from that acorn, rather than the ash or the elm-tree from that seed. There is no man that ever God breathed the breath of life into can account for this—can tell us how these effects are produced. It must be by a perfect Almighty energy, operating on every part of the creation he has formed. He is as evident in the formation of the oak-tree,—yes, as evident there, as he can be among the archangels whom he has made in the heaven of heavens. We live *in* him; we move *by* him; we have our being *from* him. We cannot live but in and through him; here we may

dwel, for in him there is life, and this life was the light of men.

But the apostle certainly took the other view of the subject, and not this—man as dying. And it required this interposition to save him from death.

I need not long detain you upon this topic, you know what I would say ; you have heard what I have said upon a similar subject. You have sinned, and come short of God's glory ; man had forfeited all right and title to the continual and protecting influence of his Maker, because he had sinned. Though he could have been annihilated,—though he deserved this annihilation, yet this could not have answered the purposes and designs of divine justice. Man had sinned, and must be punished for the transgression he had committed.

I believe that God, in his infinite purposes, made the human soul deathless. If I could conceive this infinitely free Spirit as bound by absolute determinations, I would say this was one of the first which must have occupied the divine mind : “ I will make a spirit, bearing as near a resemblance to myself as nature—created nature, can be made ; and it shall be deathless, it shall be indestructible—never be capable of growing old or infirm,—so that its essential powers shall never wear out, nor be destroyed ; so that there never shall be any given or specific point of time, when this soul, which I have raised up, shall eternally cease to be.”

This deathless spirit, then, with respect to its duration, had sinned against God, and was in danger of being annihilated eternally, or, taking the word in the sense in which it is sometimes used, of perishing eternally ; not by the destruction of its being, or the destruction of its powers, or properties ; but it was in danger of being miserable throughout eternity, because unholy ; in danger of being miserable throughout eternity, because an object of displeasure to that God, otherwise than by the mercy

of that God who is infinite in holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

It appears, then, that in the counsels of the Most High, there was no way by which this could live but by the incarnation and death of Jesus ; I do not say merely through his life, for he got this life that he might die ; he came into the world that he might die ; he took our nature upon him that he might be sacrificed ; this was the design of the Almighty Christ when he came into the world, that he should live to teach, and show forth the necessity of his death.

His holy life, his miracles, and his preaching, are so many texts relative to this important subject. This fact is well expressed in the epistles of the New Testament, for these are mere sermons of the apostles from the words of the Lord Jesus ; and I hold myself bound to prove, were it necessary, that there is not one new idea in all the epistles of Paul, or Peter, or John, or James, or Jude ; everything is drawn from the sayings and doings of the Lord Jesus ; and we need go no further than the Gospel according to St. Matthew, in order to find out the substratum of the whole—all the texts out of which these divine discourses are all formed.

This is an answer,—and, as I take it, a complete one, to the insinuation that has been so often made, that “the apostles and preachers said more about Jesus Christ than he said about himself.” He was a holy man ; he reprobated error and iniquity wherever he found them ; and gave himself as a pattern of a pure and spotless life. This they have declared and preached concerning him, who were near him. Therefore, this insinuation is false, most certainly so. I have read my Bible as closely as any of them, perhaps as any ten or twenty of them ; I have weighed it every syllable, sentence by sentence, and word by word, and this is my conviction from the whole, my most serious conviction, that all that is said

by the apostles,—and they preached redemption through the blood of Jesus alone,—all that is said by them, is said on grounds, significations, precepts, and doings of the Lord Jesus himself; so that they said nothing that his own words and conduct did not authorize them to say. And, as I said before, having taken infinite consequences from infinite principles, it was impossible for them to overdraw their inferences from premises of this kind.

Life is dear to man. What is so precious as life? The father of lies once spake an essential truth, when he said, “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.” Dearly as man loves the world,—dearly as he loves riches,—dearly as he loves honours, and so forth, he will part from all these to save his life; because it is the love of life to which the soul of man is wedded, and which is implanted there by the authority and mercy of God. On this account it is that this argument comes so home to the human bosom, and to which God so frequently speaks: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but (had rather) that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil way; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Why will ye die? There is now no reason for it; why should we die? There is, if we take reason merely as itself a necessity that we must perish; but there is no such reason in or out of heaven; on the contrary, there is every reason that we should live.

Herein was this love manifested, “that we might live through him.” But this life, you find, was purchased by his death. God required such a sacrifice as that offered by the Lord Jesus; and if I have any other

opportunity, while these meetings\* last, of addressing a congregation anywhere, I intend to take up this subject, and to show you, that there was a necessity for the death and sacrifice of Christ. I shall not, therefore, take it up at present ; but will then dwell upon it more at large than I could do in the few moments that remain for the present service. I only remark here, that God required this sacrifice ; and there was no other way by which a lost world could be saved, by which degraded souls could be ennobled, but by this intervention of his endless mercy and love.

Jesus Christ died for the sin of the world. While we were yet sinners, says the apostle, in due time Christ died for us,—died for the ungodly,—died for man while he was without strength. “Not that we loved God ;” this was no reason that God ultimately manifested his love to us. We say, love begets love ; so it does among men ; and we hardly find an exercise for love of any kind, till a person imagines he has received something from another,—something of gain,—something of interest ; hence comes the excitement which is commonly called love.

What could the Almighty see, in looking upon any of us,—in looking upon any of the nations of the earth,—any of the nations of the earth, as they are now found, after a thousand years of moral discipline in which they have been living, in order to merit this death and this intercession ? Is there anything now, in the most religious nation under heaven ? Is there anything in England, which I believe to be that nation ? Is there any nation under heaven where a greater portion of light

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and knowledge is found? Is there anything that could induce the mighty God to come down from heaven? Is there anything in this kingdom that could be a reason to the infinite Mind to exert itself in infinite actions of a mental kind? and that mind can never exert itself but from infinite reasons. Can we find any reason why He should exert himself in order to save the people of England, for anything they have done that is good, or for anything they are doing, or for anything they hope to do; or, by reason of that moral and intellectual improvement which has taken place in the course of time, that they can do? Oh, no. Out of his own infinite and eternal bosom, must be drawn, in every case, the reasons of his love; for this love seems to be essential to his eternal nature; it seems to comprise every attribute essential to Godhead. From this love he drew the reasons of his conduct,—through this love he made man. The exuberance of his eternal love induced him to make creatures with whom he might share his own infinite goodness, and holiness, and happiness; and he made the soul of man, perhaps, as near himself, in its powers and capacities, as it was possible for a creature to be made, in order that he might communicate to the intellect as much of his own infinite holiness, and goodness, and truth, and happiness, as it was possible to communicate.

Herein was love, in the first instance, to save this soul from falling into endless ruin. After all the Almighty's projects and designs, and the execution of them in the creation of man, and the system of what is called providence, which is the rule and government of God in the world, to prevent the whole from going to shipwreck and ruin, and his designs from being frustrated; after all this, I say, here comes in the incarnation. God was manifested in the flesh; and he was manifested as the only way of saving the soul—the soul that dwells in that flesh—



that flesh that was constructed by the infinite skill of God—that flesh that he had determined should rise again after death—the soul formed to animate this flesh, working upon the various powers of this flesh—to preserve this soul in a state of moral goodness, and to render it capable of that moral happiness for which it was formed, and which it had now lost by sin and transgression—yes, to save that soul, he came, and he died, and rose again, and is set down at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to make intercession for us.

Herein, then, is love ; a love that draws its motives and reasons from itself ; takes up the creature in a state of absolute demerit, never deserving anything ; and that in this ruined state, God could look upon you with compassion, and even delight—herein is love. Talk of love *here*, benevolence *there*, patriotism *yonder*,—herein is love. And yet the apostle could not dismiss the subject without saying, “not that we loved God.” Do not imagine that this is owing to any goodness there is in you. You have your being from him, and can do nothing but as empowered by him ; all your good actions are produced by his Spirit working in you ; all your righteous actions are given from God, and it is entirely through the power and influence of God that they are produced.

The inference that he draws from this is : “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” But these words refer to the state of the church principally, to the state of men and women in religious society. It is a pity that it was ever necessary to preach the doctrine of love to people of this class. I would make an apology to God and man for being obliged to preach a doctrine of this kind, in what is commonly called the church of Christ. When we conceive of the church of Christ, in order to have that name, we are assured it must be a company of men and women believing in the

Lord Jesus Christ—working righteousness—having received all from God ; giving up all again to God ; having received “bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering,” and so forth ; and having thus received them, they put them on. This is a most glorious metaphor, and seems at first sight inapplicable. The apostle here intimates, by a very strong figure indeed, that he who has such moral feelings and perceptions, such spiritual perfections, that wherever he turns his eye, his heart is affected ; that it is impossible for him to see a state of misery, without endeavouring to console it—a state of wretchedness, without endeavouring to alleviate and relieve it—a state of poverty without desiring to enrich it. They are all feeling, without and within, a system of feelings ; having bowels of mercy and kind compassionate feelings toward one another, and reverential and filial feeling with respect to God.

I take this, my brethren, as applying to the state of the world ; and I draw my inference from a very small word here : “If God *so* loved us, we ought also to love one another.” He loved us when we loved not him ;—“not,” says the apostle, “that we loved God :” we were enemies to God—enemies in our minds by wicked works. If he *so* loved us, while we were enemies, while we were sinning against him, and against our own souls—“living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another ;”—if in that condition, the philanthropy of God visited us, then we should *so* visit and love one another. Then those that are our enemies—those who are our bitterest enemies and persecutors—those who would be our tormentors, if they had us in their power—those who would direct against us their utmost malice, we should love even them. And how can we do otherwise ? We see it is the devil that is in them, that leads them to injure their fellows ; and most piteous is the case of those who

are under the influence of hatred, malice, and ill-will, because this is the spirit of the wicked one. I will not allow that the human soul feels these things independent of a foreign influence; it is a proper subject for this foreign influence of the devil to work upon, because its passions and powers are impaired; therefore he finds these are strong and ready instruments in his hands, to exercise his ill-will, and malice, and hatred, and envy upon. This is the origin of all the war and misery that are in the world, or ever have been in the world; and all the famine and war that ever can be in the world. These things cannot spring from the Spirit of the living God, from him who has "bowels of mercy and kindness." It is the old murderer working in the souls of men, that brings forth the fruit of eternal death.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only cure. There is a fountain of life proclaimed in the gospel dispensation which we in vain endeavour to procure from the world. This love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit of Christ, is the grand cure of all this malevolence. Wars and fightings will then no longer be among us, because our infernal lusts will be consumed: but while these lusts are working in the members, they are leading to all the work of desolation, cruelty, and death. When these are removed, men love one another, because they love God. They love him because he first loved them, and they love him, not merely from a consideration of what he has done for them, but also on account of what he has done in them.

My brethren, would you wish for a better text to preach from for the lost heathen, than what these last words present you with? "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Look at your blind brethren throughout the earth; if you can, reach out your hand to lead them into the way of truth. Look at your miser-

able brethren in the different nations of the earth : can you console them ? Yes, you can, by offering to them those very comforts by which you yourselves have been comforted in God. Look at your lost brethren in the world, look at them as God looked upon you when he sent his son Jesus Christ to redeem you ; when he sent him to bless you, and to turn you away from your iniquities. Stretch out your hand to relieve these men : let not the devil get any of them, if it is in your power to prevent it, under the guidance and direction of God. You have heard such tales, that they have already begun to warm your breast, and to animate and fire your bosom ; you have heard such tales of the dark places of the earth being filled with the habitations of cruelty, that there is no need for me to dwell upon them here.

Remember, that where the gospel is not, there the people are dying, perishing : every man is accursed of God, and a curse to himself. Where the gospel is not, there men live entirely to themselves ; and wherever a man lives to himself, he is a curse both to himself and to his fellow. Remember, there is no cure in the world but the gospel of Jesus. In vain do we send this book. If it were possible for me to feel what is commonly called reverence for anything that is not essentially good, I should feel it for this book, because it is the Word of the Most High. But I tell you, my friends, in vain do we send this book, that comes from the immediate inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, as the broad seal of his holiness and justice (and holiness and truth are deeply stamped upon it) ; in vain do we send even this book to the heathen nations, if we send not the men who, having been converted to God themselves, know how to strengthen their brethren, and to enlighten the inhabitants of darkness, in order that they may live.

The Bible Society I venerate, and every exertion that

has been made by them in order to bring this Bible before the world. The Baptist missionaries I venerate : I never think of them but with my mind levelled in the dust : when I compare myself with them, I sink into nothingness. Our own missionaries too, who have taken their lives in their hands, I also deeply venerate as men of God. These go with the Bible to the people, and explain and enforce its truths. Bibles, thank God, cost very little now, when once brought into the language of a people, by reason of the very wonderful operations of printing, by whose operations the wants of millions have been supplied. “Understandest thou,” said the apostle Philip to a very inquiring and enlightened heathen,—“Understandest thou what thou readest?” And he said, “How can I except some man should guide me?” Why are these words recorded, and without a single comment ? why recorded without any explanation such as men may deem necessary, in order to get at the meaning ; but simply to show us that God intended that the Bible should be circulated as pure as possible, in its most simple and uncorrupted state, among the heathen nations, that their weak minds may not be distracted by the opinions and sentiments of their more enlightened brethren ? God intended that missionaries should be sent with the Bible to every nation where he sends this word. He intends you to send these missionaries ; and he calls upon you this morning, by his sovereign voice, through the instrumentality of my feeble and broken voice to you—he calls upon you to furnish the means of sending out these men, in order to publish the name of Jesus, him in whom you trust and triumph,—him for whom a great many members of this congregation would spill their blood, because they know that he poured out his blood for them. He calls upon you to use those means, every

means in your power. He honours you by requiring you to do it, because he does not need your assistance ; for the silver and the gold are his. He calls upon you to send this gospel of the grace of God to the lost nations of the world. And, my dear brethren, do you not feel yourselves called upon to make every exertion in your power, that prudence might dictate ? Does not every man's heart glow, and every man's hand burn to lay hold on that property which he can afford, in order to send this gospel into all the dark places of the earth ?

You have attempted this, and there is no reason why we should discontinue our exertions. You have most glorious tidings from the east, from the west, from the north, and from the south, of the beneficial influence of this gospel of the grace of Christ. The men you have sent out have been the means, under the blessing of the Lord Jesus, of turning many from darkness to light. Your *money* has succeeded, by the blessing of God, in producing this most important end.

I need not say one word to induce you to go on with this help. Have you ever lost a single farthing, which you have given to God ? Look at the hand of his providence that has been continually upon you : look at the increase of your possessions ; look at the blessings that have taken place in your families : your health and that of your children has been repaired by the miraculous intervention of that God whose hand you did not particularly notice at the time. Look at all these blessings, and say, whether or not God has repaid you again. And if he has done nothing in this way, look at the luxury of doing good till you feel it. How many poor heathen have been already enlightened ! How many call Jesus Lord, by the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit, in consequence of your sending this gospel to them ! I

call upon you this morning, in the name of the God of love. You are to be beneficent according to your power. You must feel something for the state of these heathen. Let, then, your hearts dictate to your hands ; and I pray that the good hand of God may be upon you, in order to the furthering of this most important work. And may God Almighty bless you for it.

## SERMON LI.

### THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

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LUKE xxiv.. 46—48.

46. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day :

47. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. .

48. "And ye are witnesses of these things."

THOUGH it is natural for those who preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to wish that all the world might hear, and understand, and feel the power of that gospel, yet I must confess I have always a terror of preaching when I see a crowded congregation;\* because many stand inconveniently, and feel inconveniently, and, in consequence, hear inconveniently; and this must depress the spirit. In such cases, we have need of more than ordinary application to the throne of grace, for recollection, and for power to attend to the things that God speaks, that we may wait upon him without distraction. Alas, my friends! what do we here if we meet not with

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\* This remark was occasioned by the circumstances of his own auditory; the sermon having been preached on the Missionary Anniversary, City Road, London, April 30, 1820, as hinted in the preceding sermon.—EDITOR.



God? and vain is our meeting together here, if we receive not some good from him. I need not tell you how solemn a thing it is for a sinner to come into the presence of his Maker: I trust this is suitably impressed upon your minds, and that now you are endeavouring to behave as persons in the presence of their Judge, and as persons who are come to receive grace to help in time of need.

We have, upon the whole, but one subject on which to address you; our subject is JESUS: our trumpet gives but one sound; and, thank God, that is not an uncertain one; it is known what it means; and the people who hear it understand it. We have to preach to the nations the gospel of the grace of God; and that gospel assures them, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And all this, we find, is founded upon a strange economy of the Divine grace, the incarnation, and passion, and death, and burial, and resurrection of Him who is the Author of this gospel. And that gospel is the glad tidings proceeding from this; it is the ground upon which all is established; and it is no wonder that those who do not believe, or who endeavour not to believe the Christian truth, should try to sap the foundation of this doctrine—this main prop, as much as possible; for here is the foundation of Christianity; and if the foundation could be destroyed, I need not say that the superstructure would fall to the ground.

It has been frequently argued—and probably those who used the argument supposed it to be strongly argued—that our Lord never designed to be understood as those who are called orthodox preachers—those who preach salvation through the blood of Jesus, have understood him. But if we take his own words and dis-

courses, purely and dispassionately, we shall find even that doctrine to have been delivered by him, and that doctrine the same which has been preached by the apostles themselves.

I am telling you nothing that I have merely read, or heard others say, and so forth ; but I am telling you of a conversation that passed between one of those people who are called infidels, and your preacher. The argument urged was, either that the apostles misunderstood our Lord, or that we misunderstand them, when they attribute the redemption of the world to his sufferings and death. And the argument was conducted on this ground—and the ground proved to be very weak indeed—that if God is a just God, it would be inconsistent with his justice to oblige an innocent person to suffer for the guilty ; and that in all well-regulated laws, in all the nations of the earth, there have been made various exactments, and been instituted multitudinous provisions, in order to prevent the innocent from suffering for the guilty ; and that nothing could be more foreign to the principles of justice or humanity than a doctrine of this kind.

That all such arguments have been replied to variously I well know ; and, I think, in such a way as completely to overturn all the strength of the objection, and to show, not the establishment, because that I consider as done, but to show that the doctrine, as established, is a doctrine of universal revelation ; and that, properly understood, the Law and the Prophets, Jesus and his evangelists, their successors the apostles, and their followers, or successors in the Christian church, the primitive Christians, and the Fathers, and all from the primitive Christians down to the present time, who have attended to the voice of these prophets, and apostles, and so on, have held the same faith ; and it is not possible, from

the nature of the thing, that these persons could be mistaken.

If we hear, for instance, of a fact that took place a thousand years ago, and we find there are persons alive who do some particular act in commemoration of that fact, and they know persons who acted last year in the same way, and who can remember this kind of act being done for forty, fifty, or seventy years,—and we find from history, and the accounts of these people, that they have all acted in the same way,—so that we can trace up through these various links an unbroken chain of evidence, from the time this fact took place down to the present, we then see, that those who were best qualified to judge of the subject judged in this way; that this is the way in which they apprehended it, that their contemporaries and successors apprehended it in the same way, and that we apprehend nothing different from them;—we have then, I say, the best evidence that our principles, and our consequences derived from these principles, are established on a right ground. Now this is true concerning what is called the doctrine of the atonement. We never find a time (and I will risk every thing on this assertion)—we never find a time in the Christian church, in which that Christian church did not teach this doctrine—in which she denied this doctrine. There have been persons in all ages, who have endeavoured to be wise above what is written; and foolish man has frequently been inclined to set up his wisdom against the wisdom of God; but that the great body of Christians never abandoned this doctrine, is an incontestable fact.

I confess that, though I am given a great deal to reasoning, if I had no other proof of the truth of this doctrine, than so far as it depends upon the testimony of those who profess faith in Christ Jesus, I should conceive

that this was sufficient to satisfy every reasonable mind ; and I should find it sufficient to content my mind upon the subject, and to bring it, not only to a state of acquiescence, but I should feel it my glory to receive this faith, as I saw so much depending upon it.

If it were to be pushed, as a consequence, that all those who hold this faith aright must, from such and such promises, be made partakers of such and such blessings ; the pardon of sin, the Spirit of God witnessing that pardon to the soul ; the sanctifying influences of Him who is called the Holy Spirit, so that all bad tempers and desires are done away from the mind, and that doctrine rested here for truth ; this doctrine assures me, that if I have felt it, and properly received it, and, on the ground laid down in this doctrine, made application to the great God in this way, through the sacrificial death and passion of Jesus, I should receive these blessings. I have then a means of proof put into my own hand, and have it in my power to satisfy myself of the truth of this doctrine. I have it in my power to do away my scruples, or to have my doubtfulness on the subject confirmed. There is no other way in which its truth can be shown. If this word offers to communicate such and such blessings, and it fails to bestow them to those who sincerely and in the fear of God make application for them, it must prove itself to be a cunningly devised fable : it has committed itself most confessedly, to risk its credit upon such a ground as this ; and I should know, in reference to myself, this gospel could not be of God.

But, on the other hand, if I find these blessings received—if my penitent heart is comforted—if my guilty conscience is eased—if my burden is taken away—and if God's Spirit witnesses with mine that I am a child of God—if my bad tempers are removed, and the mind

which was in Christ Jesus is communicated—then I have a proof that all this is absolutely true, and that this is the doctrine of God's kingdom. When I find nothing of the kind produced by the opposite doctrine—when it has not promised this pardon, nor this purification of the heart—and when I find that the doctrine of the atonement, as preached by Christ and his apostles, promises nothing more than what it bestows, then this fact, to me, is an evident proof that it is of God : this witnesses with God's eternal Spirit to the perfections of God.

I have thus entered into a kind of detail of this argument, as I see it supported by the text read in your hearing, without a formal division, or formal reference to the text ; because I preach this morning not a new doctrine. I shall, at the same time, build all I may say upon what Jesus Christ has himself asserted. What is said here I consider to be a conclusive mode of reasoning. I shall, however, resort to a different kind of argument, one that has never yet been adduced upon the subject ; not because I think it is a difficult one, but to show you how much strength there is in this case, and how much fitted to overthrow all the objections raised against the doctrine.

I must read to you a few words in the context, in order to bring me to the argument. There is an account in this chapter of two of the disciples going to Emmaus, and of Jesus, who was unknown to them, associating himself with them, and speaking to them concerning his death, that had taken place at Jerusalem : “ And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.” Just before he had said, “ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken : ought not Christ to have

suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" This, however, does not come so conclusively to the point as what immediately comes after: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."

From these words of our Lord I understand, that whatsoever is written in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms related to him; and that there are a multitude of things in the Law, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms that concerned himself. Now when we look at the five books of Moses, we do not discover, so far as I have been able to find out, any pointed testimony concerning Jesus Christ's coming into the world, and suffering for the sins of men; and that, through such suffering, men should be reconciled unto God. Hence, I take the words which the Psalmist wrote as referring to the great *subject* of these books, when he says, "In the volume of the book"—in the whole roll, it is written of him, that he should do the will of God. And it appears that the will of God was this especially, that he should be incarnated, and die for the sins of the world. To this everything that is in the law, we shall find, must necessarily apply; because the essence of that law is the sacrificial system, and that sacrificial system must necessarily refer to him;—I say, must necessarily refer to him, on this ground, because, taken in itself, as a religious service, we must ever conclude concerning it, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has done, that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls, and of goats, should take away sins." There can be nothing more self-evident than this. What relation is there between the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats, and the

purifying of my conscience from dead works? What kind of influence could the shedding of the blood of a brute animal have upon the moral state of the soul of any man? Could it blot out one sin—atone for one iniquity—purify from one moral depravity? Every man must join with the apostle, and say, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

When we find that the Holy God, in the most solemn, in the most awful manner, did establish the whole of that system—did require these beasts, and bulls, and goats to be sacrificed—and these rams and red heifers, and the sprinkling of the ashes, and all this—that he was the Author of this system—we see then necessarily, from considering the perfections of his wisdom, that this must have been wise, and proper, and just, and good. But we see that, taken in itself, it has no marks of wisdom. I repeat it, I do most solemnly think, that in itself there are no marks of wisdom, no marks of propriety, no marks of justice, nor any marks of goodness. The institution that required the death of these animals, in such and such circumstances, in reference to such and such objects—taking these things merely in themselves—considering them as beginning and terminating in themselves—had none of those attributes to recommend it.

Look into the Psalms, and we get light upon the subject, and into the New Testament, and we have still more abundant light. We find that the whole of these were ordained to point out another kind of sacrifice. This was expressive enough, significant enough, considering them as God had instituted them, and as referring to a sacrifice that was to come in the fulness of time; and that, what was said of them, was said in reference to this sacrifice; and that they derived all their avail-

ableness and importance from that which they represented. They represented a sacrifice, which was Christ manifested in the flesh, and dying upon the cross. This was what God intended to represent by the law. All that was written in the law, making a reference to the Mosaic institutions, expressly spake concerning the Lord Jesus ; and they would have no significancy, if separated from himself.

To come to this point more fully, I shall read you a few words out of a psalm, with which you are well acquainted : “ Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ; mine ears hast thou opened : burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart.” Can this refer to David ? With what authority could David, or any man say, God had *not* required a sacrificial offering for sin ? Most certainly, God had not only required, but had instituted it. It was his own appointment ; he had prescribed both the forms themselves, and the very animals, and the state of the animals ; they were to be offered according to the prescribed forms and modes.

But here we find a secret, and this secret most affectingly and divinely revealed : this was to last but for a time. So that a time was coming in which it could be said by God himself, who had instituted it, that sacrifice and offering he would no longer : they have accomplished the end for which he appointed them. And when we find that an end proposed by wisdom is accomplished, of course, the means in reference to that end are discontinued by the wisdom that devised it. But how was this accomplished ? Not in the person of David. During his whole time, sacrifice and burnt-offering continued to be offered ; and he was the last of men that



would unnecessarily have wasted the blood of a victim. His wise son, and all who followed him, and all the prophets, continued to prescribe the same thing ; at the same time, informing the people, that these referred to greater, and more important matters.

The voice of the prophets confirmed what was written in the law. And we find one prophet (and he is not the only one that confirmed this part of the law), the prophet Isaiah, I mean, speaking concerning the death of Jesus, in the most circumstantial manner ; so much so, that to persons ignorant of the Bible, it would seem, as if the thing had taken place,—but it did not take place till seven hundred years after he had spoken. He even mentions the manner of his death, his being taken away from judgment, none of the forms of justice having been attended to in his case : he does more, he comes to the very circumstance of his burial, and the person in whose tomb he should be laid, with such exactness, that we find all the particulars as plain before the mind of that heavenly man, as if they were all transactions then passing before his face. The prophets then wrote concerning him ; and David, in the Psalms, confirmed what the prophets had written. Some were before, and some followed him : but they all offer the same kind of testimony : the inspiration of one blessed man, we shall find justified by positive assertions from another, who was taught by the same inspiration : and thus we see inspiration bearing testimony to inspiration.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have taken the Law of Moses for his text, as it stood in reference to CHRIST. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only proper commentary on the Law of Moses. No man ever understood the Law of Moses, but through the Epistle to the Hebrews. He who takes the Epistle to the Hebrews, in commenting on this law, has taken the

only possible criterion by which to judge of it. He says, when he has told you that it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, “Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me :” now mark here ;—“In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, thou hast had no pleasure.” Though these were appointed by God himself, God is here asserted by the apostle, never to have been pleased with them. Now, he has asserted in the most solemn manner, and it is worthy of our deepest consideration—he has asserted, that here was a system furnished by God himself, in which he had no pleasure, considered in itself; but in which he had the highest pleasure, considered in reference to that of which he made it the representation. “Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offerings for sin, thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law.” These words, “neither hadst pleasure,” must, then, refer to the law, considered merely in itself. “Then, said I,”—and he here refers to the LORD, to your Redeemer—“Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” Here, then, the will of God is referred to, not only as the institutor of the sacrificial system under the Law, but as the institutor of a more holy and excellent sacrificial system under the Gospel. Then, he says, “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” He taketh away the Mosaic, that he may establish the gospel dispensation. “By the which will, we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” This will of God refers to the sanctification or salvation of the soul: and this will, in order that it might be fulfilled, required the representative system for a time: it required that which was signified by the representative system—the death of CHRIST,—as that alone by which

the soul of man could be saved. We have now evidence before us, that what the psalmist wrote, in reference to this point, we have apprehended correctly, because it is taken in the same point of view by an inspired man in the New Testament.

We see, then, it was the will of God; I wish to found much on this. It was the will of God that Jesus Christ should suffer, and suffer for this very purpose, namely, that man might be saved. Now, if we have a requisition coming from God himself, we ought to look into the perfections of the divine nature, in order to find out the nature of that requisition. We all believe that God is infinitely perfect, infinitely wise, infinitely holy, infinitely just, and infinitely good; that he cannot be deceived; that he cannot deceive; that it is impossible for him to do anything wrong; that it is likewise impossible for him not to do that which is right; and that if he design anything, it must be right, and wise, and proper, and necessary, and just, and good. That God has required the death of Jesus Christ, the evidence that I have brought before you, is evidence full and complete in point of proof. Therefore, I conclude, it must have been wise, and proper, and necessary, and just, and good: for it is impossible for infinite wisdom to devise what is not wise; it is impossible, when God works, that he should not devise what is proper, and suited to its place in the economy of his work, and constituted appropriately to that which he intends doing. It is equally evident that God could not require, or will, what is not necessary—I mean, in reference to the perfection of his work. The work itself must be laid in wisdom; its plans must be laid in infinite wisdom; and every part of these plans must be proper, and suitable to each other, and stand in reference to the whole: for, not so much as one thing can be made by this infinite wisdom, but must stand in

relation to another ; all the parts in the plan must be just, both in principle and application. I have proved, then, that all this must be just : that there can be no principle of injustice in any act or volition of the living God, who is the fountain of justice. If, then, we find he has required anything, this thing must be according to justice, because God would not have required it if it had not been so. Then it must necessarily be good, because God is the fountain of excellence and beneficence. He who is called emphatically *love*—"God is love"—could not devise, could not determine, could not will, could not work anything that had not for its object good—good in reference to himself ; I mean, as an illustration of the perfections of his own nature ; good in reference to the creature, provided that creature be an intelligent one.

Here is my argument :—God has, by the evidence of these Scriptures, required the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. From what has been already argued then, I say, this requisition must have been perfectly wise, or else God would not have required it : it must have been perfectly proper, as a part of the mighty work of God : it must have been absolutely necessary, because the work could not be complete without such a thing being devised and executed : it must have been just, because he can do nothing that is unrighteous : it must have been good, because he is the fountain of benevolence.

My brethren, if I mistake not, here is an argument stronger than the pillars of heaven itself, that God did require the death of Jesus Christ for the salvation of a ruined world ; that he required it because it was wise, and proper, and necessary, and infinitely just ; and that he requires it, because his reasons were infinitely good. Now, I know not a flaw in this argument ; I believe there is not a man under heaven can find one. The

thing is determined for ever : that far from the incarnation of Jesus Christ being improper or unjust ;—far from its being improper that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, it must, because God devised and has required it, be consistent with everything that can be called infinite justice and holiness in the Divine Being. Our Lord himself testified the whole of this : he testified it in one word—“ Christ *ought* to suffer, and enter into his glory :” and in the portion before us—“ *must* suffer :” and he “ *must* rise from the dead :” “ it *behoved* him to suffer,” and to raise from the dead his dead body. And it was all in reference to this great point, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached among all nations. From hence, I gather (and my inference stands in the closest connexion with my premises—to the whole of my argument) that repentance and remission of sins cannot be proclaimed—no man has authority to proclaim it—nor can it be proclaimed in any way, but as founded on this sacrificial offering. All the other doctrines are built upon this ; and without this there is no vital efficacy in any of them.

Let us look a little closer into this point. Repentance is to be proclaimed, and remission of sins. He was speaking now to the apostles, whom he was about to send to preach in all nations : tell men, they *may* repent. This, my brethren, is one of the first accents of the gospel,—one of the most encouraging and most powerful ; tell them, they *may* repent. If we could not say this, we must say to men, Despair—be wretched—be perishing—be unhappy here, and as miserable as your bodies and souls can be made throughout eternity. The very doctrine of repentance, proclaimed by the authority of God, gives us to understand that the evil which is done may be repaired. But he must be as unwise as he is foolish, who could suppose that repentance, or sorrow for sin,

could be available for the salvation of his soul ; that is, that it could blot out his sin, and purify his heart. I can see no more alliance between the pangs of my guilty conscience, and the tears that flow from my eyes, in reference to purging my conscience from dead works, than I can see in the flowing of the blood from the throat of an animal that has been cut, and the life-blood poured out as a sacrificial offering to God. Hence, we are led to conceive, that it is not because we have repented of our sins that thereby we shall be saved ; but God gives us to understand, that repentance is a conviction of sin, deep sorrow for that sin, contrition of heart because we have sinned against him,—showing us the utter inefficacy of any endeavour of ours to atone for the sins of our souls, or purify our minds from unrighteousness. This must lead us directly to him who has given us to feel our need of him, by whose blood the guilt of sin is taken away, and by the efficacy of whose Spirit the soul is purified from all unrighteousness.

We see, then, the absurdity of attributing anything to this repentance ; and yet we find, that if we do not repent we cannot be saved. We shall see the propriety of this requisition, *ye must repent*, because he who does not feel the wickedness of his own heart, will never feel the necessity of a Saviour. Why do we see so many persons who seem to fail here ? It is because they never think of offering up a petition to him in the whole course of the twenty-four hours,—here is the whole mystery ; it is because they do not repent ; they do not feel their need of him. The Bible is in their house, and may be in their hands ; it is read in the place of divine worship ; they may hear the law, and the prophets, and the psalmist, and the apostles, all bearing this testimony to this point, “ Jesus Christ came into the world to save

sinners ;” and they hear this invitation of the Lord, “ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest :” and yet they do not repent ; they do not turn from the evil of their ways. Such as savingly believe, feel their need of a Saviour ; they feel that the doctrine of repentance alone will not atone for a single sin. Then, we find the necessity of humbling ourselves before God, and throwing our souls on the merit of his blood for the remission of our sins ; to cure the disease in our hearts ; to ward off the pangs of an eternal death. We cannot but perceive, from experience, that here we have no continuing city ; and, that after death, we have no reason to expect any cure. They who feel their sins press heavily upon them, and feel that they are guilty before Almighty God, will also feel the necessity of throwing themselves upon him for mercy, that they may not perish, but have everlasting life. They will feel that they must flee to God, and lay hold of the hope set before them in the Gospel ; and if they do not lay hold of this hope, there is nothing in heaven or hell that can prevent them from perishing everlastingly. My brethren, there are a number of such individuals. We cannot comfort them in this miserable condition but by pointing them to him who died upon the cross ; there is the cure for all their maladies. If “ God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life ;” then God has given us eternal life ; then we press upon the penitent the necessity of believing ; believing what ? that God so loved them that he sent his Son to die for them ; that he has suffered, and entered into his glory. And if Jesus has actually died, his death is sufficient for the atonement, sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction of their sins, and of the sins of the

whole world; and God, in consideration of this, can blot out their sins, heal their diseases, and love them freely.

Thus, then, brethren, the doctrine of repentance is necessary. It derives all its efficacy from the doctrine of the atonement; and the doctrine of faith itself would be nugatory without it. When we are called to believe this doctrine of repentance as being of itself the means of salvation, how little consolation can we derive from it! But when men are called to believe that the sacrificial death of Christ will as assuredly reconcile them to God, as that the shilling they have in their hand will buy twelve pennyworth of food for their dying bodies, they go with the same confidence, with his sacrificial offering, to provide salvation for their souls, as they go to the market with their shilling to provide food to preserve their bodies from perishing. This argument is proper when we take up the language of faith. Preach, then, to the nations, repentance and remission of sins.

The term *remission of sins*, we frequently restrict. It does not refer to any part of the Old Testament law, or merely to the act of God's mercy, that blots out our guilt; but it signifies, properly speaking, the *taking away of sin*. Now, this includes all sin,—as much as there is in what is called the palace of the soul of man,—as much as can be found in the soul of a transgressor. There is the sin of the heart producing sin in the life, and conscience registering the act; there is deliberation, there is design, in the unrighteous and fallen state of the soul; there is the planning of transgressions, and the executing of these plans; there is a complete system: there is a working of sin against the authority, against the righteousness, and against the holiness of God; there is the execution of these infernal workings against the law and authority of God; there are the internal



workings manifesting themselves externally, and trampling under foot his precepts. Now, the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin ; these inward, as well these outward sins ; the power and guilt of sin ; the pleasures of sin ; it takes all away. All this is comprised in the term, *remission of sins* ; it includes the forgiveness of sins, and the removal of sins. We should never restrict it, for our own soul's sake, and for the gospel's sake. There would be, assuredly, a removal of a great part of the excellence of the gospel, if we were to restrict it. There must be a removal of guilt from the conscience ; the sin of the conscience cannot be taken away, and your evil tempers remain ; the seed of the serpent must not remain in your soul. What good do we get from the mere act of the remission of sins, as restricted to the simple idea of pardon for what is past ? We shall soon find that sin will be continued. If we go not to God to have the evil principle of sin taken away from our hearts, alas, my friends, we shall soon incur a new debt, and we shall be deeply guilty before God. Christ came, then, to destroy its power, as well as to take away its guilt ; he came to remove the principle, that there might be no more transgression. I do most solemnly say, if this were not to be found in the gospel creed, I never could be brought to consider it a system worthy the infinite wisdom and goodness of God. If no provision is made against leaving the soul under the power, and under the influence, of inbred sin,—if there were any difficulty in the way not surmounted, or surmountable. on the behalf of the faithful, that would still prevent me from receiving a clean heart, and a renewed spirit,—then, I know not how I could perfectly love God, or worthily magnify his holy name.

I am astonished that any person, with a full view of these obligations upon the blood of Jesus, with the

strongest conviction of the eternal Godhead on his mind, should tell us (but we know it is incorrect), that we cannot be saved from all sin in this life. It is not the gospel of the Son of God; so far as their trumpet gives this vile sound, it has not the authority of God's command. He has authorized his disciples to proclaim the taking away of sin,—everything that can be called sin,—everything that can be called **unrighteousness**,—everything that is contrary to God. He has told his people that they shall be purified in this life. We need not wait for this till we come to die, or till we appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Nothing so impure, so insincere, so unjust, so useless, so unwise, in the infinite conceptions of an infinite God, could possibly be in any plan that he had formed. He proclaims, that the sentence of sin may be blotted out; he preaches repentance and faith, that the soul may be purified; in a word, that man may be built up as he was at the beginning, and his soul made a habitation of God through the Spirit. If there be any uncleanness in the house of that Spirit, in *that* soul the holy God cannot dwell. Such soul cannot be the inhabitation of God by *his* Spirit. The word signifies such an inhabitation that the inhabitant is never known to be absent from his place. It is not such a residence as some have lamented in ancient times: “O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble; why shouldst thou be a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?” But here is to be an indwelling of God. This is the grand spirit of the New Covenant: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

"I will be their God." O how emphatic are these words ! I will be all in all to them Whatever their immortal souls shall *wish* of God, shall *will* of God, shall *purpose* of God, shall *desire* of God, I will be to that soul all that it wishes, or wills, or purposes, or desires. I will be its God, its governor, its great sustainer, its all-sufficient good ; as it has been made intelligent by myself, and made for the express purpose of knowing me, and of sharing with me my eternal beatitude.

We are commanded to preach and proclaim remission of sins through his "*name* ;" and we are not authorized to say you shall be pardoned, but only as we offer it in his name. There is no other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus. Then, I am sure, I know everything that my soul can want from the benevolence of God. I know that the benevolence of God can never be exercised without an infinite reason in the divine mind for that exertion ; and these infinite reasons must necessarily imply an infinite end to be accomplished in reference to these infinite reasons. We cannot suppose any act of God to be exercised, but from an infinite reason. There is no reason given to the soul of man by the attribute of God's benevolence, why this benevolence should remit his sin. We might as well refer him to God's eternal justice, against which justice he has sinned. If we proceed on these grounds we cannot see one scale to preponderate against another. When we come to consider the holy nature of God, we shall find that the great balance will be against the exercise of benevolence, and in favour of justice, because every attribute of the Eternal Being must be supposed to be in full exercise. But, in order to show how this may be obviated, our Lord says, these doctrines are to be preached in *his name*. Men are to be told that God can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly.

How? Through the sacrifice of JESUS. He is the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus. Show me, my friends, how God can be just, and yet the justifier of any man, on any other grounds. Where is the reason of this? It is derived from the streams of infinite goodness. But if we take away the purchase and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, then we have no expectation of mercy left. He is the justifier of him who believeth on Jesus.

Look at this JESUS, my friends—God manifested in the flesh—the Almighty's fellow. To him is ascribed every attribute given to the eternal God himself. Is there anything he did, is there anything he suffered,—anything he purposed,—anything he died to purchase, that cannot but be highly pleasing in the sight of infinite justice, and wisdom, and goodness? If he has done anything for you, is there not an infinite reason to him for that which he has done, that it shall accomplish the infinite end that he has purposed? If he has suffered and died in your stead, is not this a sufficient reason why the holy and just God should impart to you the mercy which he has purchased for you?

Repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in his name. And our Lord says here, in the opening of that heavenly compassion, that shone in the influence of his life, and afterwards in the influence of his death, "Begin at Jerusalem;" with those who have crucified me,—those who were my bitterest enemies and persecutors,—those who were my murderers; give them information that they may be saved.

I know not that we can form an argument with a stronger basis than that which I have just conducted. If the people of Jerusalem, who opposed their souls' best interest, who outraged all the forms and requisitions of justice, who denied him to the end, who preferred a murderer, a base murderer, to a spotless person, to the Lord that bought them,—if these persons can have an

offer of salvation made to them—and the offer necessarily implies that they might have received it, and their souls have been eternally benefited by it—then, I conclude, that there is not a soul in a lost condition throughout the earth, which the mercy of God cannot reach. If they were commissioned to preach first at Jerusalem, it may be preached to all the ends of the earth ; and if Jerusalem sinners,—being the most infernally bad, the worst of all the nations of the world,—if these might be saved, then all may be saved ; if the gospel might be preached to them, then this gospel should be preached to all lost souls,—for there can be no other way in which a lost soul can be saved. Yes, it should be preached to all the nations and families throughout the whole empire of God, “beginning at Jerusalem.”

Our Lord proceeds: “Ye are witnesses of these things.” YE are *witnesses* that it was by the will of God that I came into the world,—that it was by the will of God that I offered up myself,—that I came to do his will. “A body hast thou prepared me, that I might do thy will.” Sacrifices, before enjoined, are now rejected. No need of shadows now ; for the substance which these shadows set forth is come himself. Ye are witnesses for me, that I have led a holy and spotless life,—ye are witnesses that I have died,—witnesses that I have not died as a malefactor ; for I have risen from the dead. Ye are witnesses that I have risen from the power of death and corruption,—that I have overcome all those things that have been employed against me. My resurrection is a proof of my purity and innocence ; an eternal disproof to all that can be said against my benevolence, and an evidence that the great end for which I suffered has been accomplished. I have now conquered death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The pouring out of my Spirit upon you is a proof that I blot out sin ; it is a proof that I fill the soul with heavenly

wisdom, that I create all things new. You are witnesses of these things. You are the witnesses of the truth of those doctrines that were taught by the Old Testament offerings. Go, then, into all the world, and preach this ; for ye are witnesses of these things.

There is one thing that I infer from this, and I know the inference to be correct, that no man, who is not a witness of these things, has authority from the living God ever to preach them. Let me ask, how can he preach these doctrines unless he is a witness of these things. Preach repentance and remission of sins : YE are witnesses of their efficacy ; you who are justified, purified, redeemed, and made partakers of my Eternal Spirit, go, and witness the same to others ; and you will witness it with effect, when you can say, he has done this for us. We were lost, as you now are ; we were on the very verge of an eternal perdition, as you now are ; we applied to God for mercy, and we have received it ; we are saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. Know, that with him there is no respect of persons. He did not justify us because we were better than others ; we have been justified freely through his blood, and for the same reasons he has sanctified us by his Spirit. Whatever claims we had upon him, you have ; whatever claims the apostles had, you have. Show me, my brethren, the vilest wretch in the streets of the city of London, and I say, that he has the same claim upon God's mercy as the apostles had, and may have as much mercy as they had to make them Christians, and to qualify them for the kingdom of heaven. Whatever they received, the vilest person upon earth may receive in the same way ; and that mercy will accomplish the same end in them as in others.

My brethren, there is yet another inference, that I mean to draw from this subject before I conclude ; that

repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to ALL NATIONS, beginning first at Jerusalem ; and you must allow that this inference is a just one. It is the design of God that *all nations* should hear the gospel. It was in consequence of this that holy and apostolic men came in early times to seek our secluded isle, and found it ; and in it they found our forefathers worshipping stocks and stones. “ Their idols were silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They had mouths, but they spake not ; eyes had they, but they saw not ; they had ears, but they heard not ; noses had they, but they smelt not ; they had hands, but they handled not ; feet had they, but they walked not ; neither spake they through their throats.” Though they had the resemblance of man yet they had no intelligence, no thought, no feeling, no power to transmit themselves from place to place : they could not guard against their own consumption, when the house in which they were worshipped was set on fire. These holy men found our forefathers out, and preached Christ ; they proclaimed repentance and remission of sins through his blood ; and we are, in consequence, a Christian nation. A little leaven was deposited in this land, and it has leavened almost the whole lump.

I was surprised, some months ago, to hear of the terror and dismay that were spread throughout this city, because a very despicable, and wretched sinner,\* had dared to call the authority of this book in question. He

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\* Allusion is here made to R. Carlisle, a man of equal effrontery, but with much less sense than T. Paine, and of the same *low school*. The “dismay” experienced could but extend to the least educated among the populace ; or if it ascended higher, it could only be a fear among the more intelligent, lest the *weak* be turned out of the way.—EDITOR.

must be a man lost to almost all sense of shame, and all sense of propriety, who will dare to do it, as that man did. When the alarm spread, I saw the city of God set upon a hill; I saw the Lamb standing in the midst of the throne. I heard, I felt the word, "I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth." I saw the church of God placed upon a rock. I saw the Almighty's arm encompassing round about it; I saw that the gates of hell could not prevail against it; and I was ashamed of my brethren, among whom the alarm had spread so rapidly. The designs of a few desperate men became manifest, by means of the open avowal of one more desperate individual among them. But there was nothing new in all this; and now all is as it was before. I take it for granted that *that* kind of doctrine will hardly have any circulation, or any influence, where this Bible is, and where there is an established ministry; and where the constitution of this ministry is to proclaim Christ crucified, and redemption through his blood. I must make an apology for going out of my way at all, to consider these men, for one single moment. They never can disprove the authority of this book,—there is such a volume of evidence in its favour. I merely mention them to show what an emanation of proof and evidence there is upon the side of this truth; so that the holy God has said, that no man shall ever prosper when he attempts to stand up against it. I am sure that every man who looks into sacred things will be able to say to such people, when such exertions are making against God and his truth, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision." I say this with the flame of his eye upon my soul. He will laugh them to scorn, and he will hold them in derision. Yes:



and if ever that passage was used by the ever-blessed God, by way of taunting, it must be in such a case as this, "He will LAUGH them to scorn."

My brethren, let us consider then, that if God sent this word to us, how much we are indebted to God who sent it. Though as to us, all tradition is lost of the men who brought it, and their history remains in the uncertain tide that has flowed down to us, so that we cannot say when it actually came, and who were the persons that first announced to us that this mercy of God might be obtained by all who sought it, yet we perceive its effects, and these effects show us, that there has been a cause ; that there has been a light springing up amongst us. And it is most certain, that we were no fitter for this mercy of God than any other nation. We were hateful and hating one another : by nature we were as every man is. Now we are Christians, and the most Christian nation under the whole heaven. I do not say this that you should think too much of yourselves ; but we are this Christian nation, because we have made a better use of the Bible than any other nation has done ; and the gospel has been better preached in this than in any other nation ; and the mode of that preaching has been better. The manner in which he has called his servants to penetrate the land, was sure to accomplish the end which we had before our eyes. If we hear of an island in the world which is destitute of this Bible, should we not wish to send it there, till there be not a single island in the world where the Bible is not ? Unless we are ignorant of this gospel, we must send this gospel to the heathen. When Jesus Christ said, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached to all nations, and ye are my witnesses, the feeling of this induced good men to come and preach it to us. We are now the witnesses for God ; and we, having received it, ought to preach it to others.

Is not this a fair inference? And woe will be to us if we do not send it. We cannot expect the blessing of God to be continued among us, if we do not. But these are the days of the Son of man; we need no longer any argument to persuade Christians that it is their duty to send the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world. This is now the universal feeling.

Let us mention one or two circumstances connected with this consideration. When Jesus Christ came into the world, there was universal peace. Twenty arguments could be produced, each of them sufficient of themselves to show that that must have been the most excellent time that could have been devised for his coming to introduce the gospel dispensation. Then this message was opened. Then, as there was universal peace, there was no interruption: men might pass from island to island, and from continent to continent, without the smallest let or hinderance. All men were in a state of peace with each other; no person who ever came among them, was supposed to be a spy upon their liberty: and when these Christian men came among them, they were either heard with indifference and indolence, or with exultation. But those who at first heard them with indifference, afterwards heard them with interest, because “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.”

We have lived some of us more than half a century in this world; and can we recollect any period more favourable to the sending out of this gospel? Can there be conceived a more propitious time than the present for sending this gospel to all the earth? There never was a period which I ever read or heard of, in which the various political powers of the world have had a more perfect understanding with each other, as to their best interests; in which they seem to have understood, more

thoroughly, each other's true political liberty. There is a great political principle, that has gone out into all the earth, so that the governments of each empire seem to have the highest confidence, the one with the other. We have a state of peace now, similar to that which existed when Jesus Christ was manifested in the world ; and if I understand the law and the prophets aright, there are a multitude of promises in them which refer to this time in which we might transmit this gospel over the face of the whole world.

My brethren, our fathers had not the privileges that we have. And if our fathers had abounded in wealth, what could they have done when (to use a homely phrase) "the world was together by the ears?" But if we abound in wealth, what cannot we do? In ancient, and even in more modern times, every government was jealous of each other. Now the fiend of war is laid : God has chained him down in his own hell. The sword is put into its scabbard ; and with all my soul, I pray that the Almighty God may give it an eternal rust there : may it never be withdrawn ! Here is the state of the time in which we live. What a most favourable period is this, to send this gospel to the heathen world ? Out of motives of love to Him who died for you, you ought to send it. This is a time in which you should come forward, in which you should make every exertion. You should deny yourselves in order to come forward, that you may send the kingdom of heaven to the heathen ; that you may inform them of God's eternal benevolence. Abate from your luxuries for a while, in order to seize, as it were, on the advantages of the time.

I need say no more to induce you to help our missions, which are some of the most highly-favoured of the blessed God, of all that are established in the earth. I have come forward this morning, in order to tell you that we

want your money. We want your assistance, to send the Bible with men who will explain its contents, to the benighted heathen. Come forward, as far as you are able. We have men waiting, who are ready to go out with this Bible in their hands, and in their hearts; but we want your co-operation to enable us to send them out. We had our missions long before you heard anything of them. We want to send them to the east, and to the west, to the north, and to the south. The sound of their feet is already at the door. I leave these things with you: I will dwell no longer upon this subject at present. Now lay your hand upon your heart, and your heart will soon dictate to your affections: and your affections will send your hand immediately to your pocket. And the whole of the glory shall be to his name, who is the “Father of the spirits of all flesh.”

## SERMON LII.

### THE LOVE OF GOD TO A LOST WORLD.

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JOHN III. 16.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’

MOST men allow, that in everything that affects us in life, we ought to endeavour to discern the foundation on which we rest, and the principle by which to guide our conduct. I am sure, in religious things, it is essentially necessary to endeavour to discern the foundation of that religion, and those principles of it by which our faith and practice are to be directed and influenced. It was a maxim among our forefathers that the Bible, without any traditions, without the inventions of men, was a sufficient rule for the faith and practice of Christians. They went farther; they asserted it was the only rule; and this was one grand feature of protestantism. As every man was bound to believe in God, and act according to his will, and there was no knowing what was implied in this believing and obedience to his will, but from the revelation made by himself; hence it was concluded, God designed his sacred Word for every man, and that it should be read and studied by all, and that

from it alone we learn how to believe, and how to live in reference to the eternal world. This reason, thank God, is still the grand principle in the protestant religion, in the churches to the present day. There has hardly been a time since the word protestant was known among men in which this principle has been held more prominently in view, than at the present time ; the Bible meets with more consideration than it ever did in this nation ; and is higher in repute in this nation than in any other nation. Look back for the space of fifty years, and we see it was comparatively little read ; and yet, if we consider the religion of those times, as we find it in the writings of the men who lived then, we shall observe, comparing it with other nations of the world, that this nation showed such a reverence to the word of God, and guarded the principal truths contained in that word, as no other nation did. Whatever may be said, as to the wickedness of the nation, and of our being a rebellious nation, and God can say much against us on that account, yet when it is compared with other nations of the earth, it is comparatively a holy nation. We have more reverence now for this Word than we ever had : the number of copies are doubled, more than doubled : the Bible is held in universal esteem ; it is a book of the whole land. Never was there a book so popular as the Bible at present is in England. Shall we say it is merely popular, and because it is become fashionable to read this Bible, or to send it abroad to the nations of the world, that man considers he has done his duty to those beings by doing so, and that the Bible has no other consideration from him ? Not so. It has had a remarkable effect upon the land. It has done much to humanize the whole nation : and I think from all I know of the land, or have read of the land, that the religion of the God of heaven was never so general in this nation as at pre-

sent. Our nation is most strangely reformed by the power of the grace of God. If this continue (and I pray the Lord of heaven that it may continue!) we shall have the mass of the nation righteous ; and I would not have any man's heart to fail him in considering we have crying sins ; I tell you, in the fear of God, that the quantum of iniquity is daily lessening, and the principle of righteousness daily increasing : men prove this by the conformity of their lives to the principles of this book. I have a right to speak, because I know the land : I have been, as I stated on another occasion, in almost every corner of it ; in almost every part of it, as a religious man ; I have known it between thirty and forty years in this point of view : I recollect what it was, I see what it is, and I find the present state bears no proportion to the former. I magnify the Lord, and I wish the congregation to do the same.

Now, my brethren, we find, not only a universally spread Bible, but faithful teachers among the people. When God sends his Word, he sends his messengers. I dare not assume what some assume, that without an interpreter the things recorded in God's Book are capable of all the purposes of salvation. I have not seen that God has ever effected this without an interpreter. With the Bible God sends his messengers. It would be almost foolish to attempt to assert, that, with his messengers, he sends his Bible, because the messenger is nothing without the Bible. Man is so inconsiderate, and requires to be called so continually to his duty, that it is necessary there should be men, whose business it is to impress on the minds of the people the things contained in God's Book : they should be accredited men, that the people may say, God is with them. Where this book goes they should go, holding forth the word of life. Hence, in the present age, Missionary Societies are more abundantly

effective than they ever were. The common sense of men saw that messengers should go with the Bible : hence, we find missionaries sent to different parts of the earth, by different companies of religious people. We have, therefore, to consider, not only the great good done among ourselves, but in the earth ; and as the grand object of the Bible, and of messengers and ministers of the Lord Jesus, is to make known God's infinite love to the world, and the provision for its redemption, and the eternal salvation of man, it is not unbecoming of us to bring this subject before our eyes this morning.\*

You have heard what the Lord Jesus speaks to us in this word. It is difficult to comprehend the subject ; it is the deepest ; it is the highest ; it is the widest in the book of God. I never expect to explain it : I never attempted to explain this subject. When I hear Jesus saying, " God so loved the world," without attempting to measure that love, or to point out what it is, except merely its effects, I see plainly, it is a sin for any man to attempt to describe it. But I see much that may be understood *in* it, and *of* it, notwithstanding the eternity connected with it, to derive from it all necessary edification and salvation.

There is one word, before we proceed, which seems to call for peculiar attention. It is the term *world*. What is meant by it ? I shall not wait now to consider the various senses in which this term is used in the Sacred Writings ; and the still more various senses in which it is used by religious people. I take it, as simply meaning, the inhabitants of the earth, or rather, the human race, because the inhabitants of the earth may confine our attention to those beings in any one specified

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\* Preached on the morning of March 1, 1818, in City Road Chapel, London.



point of time : but if we consider it as implying the human race, we shall see at once, with what deep propriety it is used in this place. If we take up the term simply by itself, as implying the terraqueous globe : the whole mass of this planet, consisting of earth, water, seas, and skies, and say this is the object of God's love, we shall not go astray ; when we consider what himself has said when he looked upon it ; when he viewed it with all its relations, as well as the constitution of the whole plan : that most astonishing harmony and order which a philosophic mind can see, and which God's infinite mind must have seen, and comprehended with infinite fulness, we cannot help considering it as a worthy object of the attention of the Almighty. I do not know that a man can be pleased without loving ; or delighted without loving. God could not be pleased, he could not be delighted in any of his works, without loving them. We may make distinctions, but we shall find no difference to sustain them. I believe God has a particular regard to the whole earthly world, formed by the effect of his wisdom and his power. As a proof of his goodness, it was not made for itself, but made for the accommodation and comfort of immortal spirits, dwelling in human bodies : for their sakes God preserves this globe. There is not a portion of its matter that is not continually before his eyes : it is regarded with the kindest attention by himself. When it is said, he upholds all things by the word of his power, we see the bearer up or sustainer of the globe. When we consider that he has made all these things ; that by his creating energy, they were produced, we know it requires precisely the same power to support an effect, as it required to produce that effect. In a moral and intelligent being, we shall find, this action could not be continued to support a certain effect unless the same reason existed in the mind of

that intelligent being to induce him to put forth his power to sustain this. I see, in supporting the world, God has precisely the same end in view as he had in producing that world : because he continues to sustain the effect : this is a proof the same power still continues to work, and that power is directed and applied by the same motive which produced that work at the beginning. I have brought this subject before you before this time. I will, therefore, only give this additional observation. Have I not demonstrated, that it requires the same energy to sustain an effect as to produce an effect ? No man who considers that, can doubt of it a moment. I now say, in moral agency, when there is power to produce an effect, it must be with a design to accomplish a particular purpose ; if that be accomplished, then he will be satisfied. I see, then, that God, the great Maker of all things, puts forth his power to sustain this effect, and it must be through the same motive that induced him to create the world, that induces him to uphold it.

Now then, in looking into this Infinite Being, as far as mortals dare look, I find, as he is infinite goodness itself, he must have an infinitely good end continually in view. I know not anything that could endear the great God to mankind more than this, that he loves his creatures : invariably loves his creatures. This principle God ever feels. See what a profusion of power he puts forth to sustain the world ; what a profusion of wisdom he has manifested, in order to keep everything in their relations to others, in order to sustain the whole. It is true, these things, to an infinite power, to a mind infinitely comprehensive, is nothing. Not anything confounds us more than the consideration of that infinite attention to every particular point and thing which continually takes place, in order that these may be preserved, and kept in their proper place, and that the end may continue to be

accomplished. This is what I call providence: the goodness of God manifested in putting forth his wisdom and power, in sustaining the globe and its inhabitants, in order to the accomplishment of the great end—the salvation of man.

Again, We find that the world was loved, even before this world existed. The vast mass of human beings were objects of the love of God, before he produced the heavens and the earth. How was this? In the divine mind, the plan was laid. Whatever is conceived there must bear the strictest relation to all the perfections of God. There is nothing conceived in the divine mind that is not the result of all the attributes of God: all the perfections of that mind. Man was formed in his mind: the idea he had formed in his own infinite intelligence: the form and fashion; the relations and connexions of all beings, howsoever varied in themselves, and yet related to each other in endless variety. He saw this so perfectly good; so illustrative of his own infinite wisdom and goodness, that he loved this world: and I need not tell you, when he formed the mass of matter, and looked upon it, that he beheld it, and lo! it was very good: just what it should be; possessing all the perfections the Divine Being intended it should possess: and this created mass all that it could be. He, who knows all things, knew that these human beings, which his own mind had formed, that these beings formed in his own likeness and image, would fall from righteousness, would make an improper use of their powers. See how the love of God works in reference to this: even before they had a being, God is purposing redemption: purposing it, when formed in his own infinite mind,—before his forming hands had given them a form and fashion, and the substantial being which we find them to possess. We need not wonder at this: it was

the continual working of the same love; it was the same principle which devised the redemption of man, that purposed the formation of man. No consideration out of himself could induce him to form man. Nothing: no human being. God formed him in his mind, that he might show forth his praise: but, speaking more correctly, it was, that he might be a sharer of the eternal felicity of his God. Hence, he was made with that vast capacity we find him to possess: capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying the felicity of God to all eternity.

A plan thus formed from wisdom, power, and goodness, is not lightly regarded. As soon as sin enters the world, God shows he had provided for the redemption of the human race: hence, the person called JESUS, the LORD JESUS. The well-beloved SON of GOD was purposed to give his life for the redemption of the world, for he is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: so that the sacrifice was purposed, even before the existence of a human being: for he was slain: his sacrificial death was contemplated in the divine mind, before the creature, that was to be its object, or whose nature was to be assumed by this GOD—before that creature was formed. So that the whole plan was perfect from the beginning: the same motive working in the divine mind: the same motive directing the influence of the divine love: the working of infinite wisdom, power, and love from the beginning; working through the whole, and crowning the whole.

If, then, we take the term *world*, as implying the *human race*, we may as consistently deny that God has purposed the redemption of the whole, as deny that God made the whole. If it was through God's infinite love, that he made man, and show me any other motive than this?—no angel in heaven, no devil in hell, no man upon earth can imagine another; if, I say, it was through

God's love that man was made, it is through that love that man exists. Well then, he created this great mass of human beings from his infinite love. The desire of his eternal exuberance was to impart himself to intelligent beings, capable of enjoying the happiness of God himself.

When he imagined the redemption of the world, the same love was directed to the same object and the same mass of worlds of human beings stands exactly in the eye of the eternal love of God, as the idea of those beings subsisted in the divine mind previously to his putting forth his hand to create man, and to breathe into that body the breath of lives, that man might be a living soul. From that time, till now, we find the same love manifested to the world. "He causes his sun to rise on the just and on the unjust." He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved." This constitutes the theory of the book of God.

The whole providence of God assures us of God's continual love to every human being ; and it was as impossible for him not to intend the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, to extend to every human soul, in all its possible efficacy, as it was to form a plan of creation and only create a part of the souls and bodies which entered originally into the divine mind. Then, my brethren, we are sure that the whole human race are objects of the love of God. Every man of you, every drunkard of you, every sabbath-breaker of you, every lover of money among you, every faithless devil-like directed soul among you, is an object of the infinite love and compassion of God. On this ground you are spared ; yes, you who are rebels against God, in the plenitude of his mercy and goodness, are spared, and blessed with innumerable blessings, and have still salvation within your

reach. But where must those live, and in what relation must they stand to the God of heaven, who fear him, and who wish to depart from every evil way? who desire to resemble him in all things? to love him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength? You lie near the heart of God Almighty; he sees in you of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. He is not satisfied with the others, because the ends and purposes of his love, with regard to them, are not yet accomplished. You cannot hear this with indifference; you are purposed, you I trust are determined, to declare yourselves on the Lord's side.

“God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son.”

Brethren, when we come to consider what the Scriptures have said respecting this person, who is called the only-begotten Son of God, we shall see that God has given the greatest gift the Almighty can bestow. What I am going to assert seems a contradiction in itself, and must be supported by a proof. This is the assertion, that God has given the greatest gift God had to give. In order to accomplish this purpose—the redemption of the human race, he has given his ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON. What are his heavens to this? What the glories of the heavens to this? These are all created things. The glories of his heavens, the perfections of his works, these are illustrations of his power and Godhead. What though he annihilate them this moment, the next moment he could again produce them; these are nothing in comparison of this. He has given HIM, whom the very Scripture has taught us to believe came from God—flows from every attribute peculiar and essential to God. We can put no distinction between his infinite nature, who is here spoken of, and the perfections of his nature whom we commonly call God. There is, except with regard to

his human nature, no difference put between the Lord Jesus Christ and the perfections of him who is called God the Father—not that they are the same, the Scriptures do not warrant this, this will not stand the test of his Book. Then you say, “We cannot comprehend how it is.” We can comprehend it as easily as we can comprehend anything relating to God. What God has done can be comprehended only by his own mind. We see that he who subsists as an Infinite Spirit has been pleased to be designated in the Bible as FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT. This Supreme Being has given us to understand that he who is called the Spirit, has every essential attribute of Godhead belonging to him ; he who is called the Son has every attribute essential to Godhead attributed to him ; and he who is called the Father, has every attribute essential to Godhead attributed to him. He is God in the proper, peculiar, essential sense of the word ; so is he who is called the Son ; as also the Holy Spirit. None of these are before or after each other. No, no, no ;\* this would destroy their eternity and Godhead. None are derived from the other ; this would destroy the infinity, and consequently the Godhead. All are infinite ; all are eternal.

Now my brethren, we see at once from this, that God had no greater gift than this. In one place this Person, the only-begotten Son of God, is called, “The Almighty’s fellow.” We understand this term as implying an *equal*. Now taking this up as we have it in the Word, what does

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Several articles had appeared in the Wesleyan Magazine, as well as separate pamphlets, published against Dr. Clarke’s opinions on the Eternal Sonship ; and some persons, unacquainted with his views, being impressed with the notion that he had given up the absolute divinity of Christ, he was anxious to undeceive them ; and spoke thus on the present occasion.—EDITOR.

it signify? God has given his fellow, his equal for the redemption of the world. Has he anything beyond this? Nothing higher than his fellow, his infinite equal. This person is given, sent into the world to take human nature upon him—to sacrifice that human nature for the human nature of all who are partakers of that nature. Hence, “He took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.” It was Abraham with whom the covenant was made for the Gentiles. That nature was sacrificed for all those partaking of that nature, love working through the whole, the same uniformity everywhere manifested, the nature he had formed being infinitely dear to the God who formed it.

I observed at the first, that I never could attempt to explain this subject. God’s love, like every other attribute of God, is infinite and eternal. I should be deterred from attempting to explain the mode from the way in which our Lord introduces it, “God so *loved* the world.” The words were not casually used by him; for the apostle uses precisely the same words, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” John seems to have entered more into the particular regards of our Saviour than any other disciple. Why? Because he resembled him most; and God loves him most who most resembles him. His perfections, so far as he sees them in the work of his hands, so far he loves that work of his hands. This man had a near acquaintance with his God. He saw this love; it came pouring out upon his mind and heart; all the powers of his soul were wrapped up in it; all the feelings of his heart were affected by it; he could not tell you its length, breadth, depth, or height. Wherever it moved, he saw an eternity of love existed in it. He sees this love in a most especial manner, assuming a body, and rendering itself tangible



by the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. He cannot comprehend this, and cries out, "Behold, what manner of love," &c. He does not attempt to explain it; he does not tell any man to attempt to comprehend it; he did not attempt to comprehend it himself. Exactly thus our Lord speaks in this place, "God so loved the world." He shows you the depth, and breadth, and height of it, in its consequences to the human race. The world is the object: "God so loved the world." Here is its length, breadth, depth, and height. It envelopes the globe; it takes in every human soul. He so loved this world, as to provide an adequate Saviour for it. Whatever the fall may be, whatever its effects, however ruinous, here is a remedy for the evil. He has given his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Another word on one of the principles in the text: that they may "not perish, but have everlasting life." Oh, this word *perish*! Perdition in the work of God! ruin in the work of God! final destruction in the work of God! This he never decreed; this could not flow from the divine mind, no modification of God's love could ever determine this. He never *determined* they should perish; he never *designed* they should perish; that was no part of the original decree which flowed from the infinite love of God, from which creation was produced. That they might not perish, he provided a Saviour. What is the perdition here referred to? It is not annihilation. I know not that anything God has formed will be finally destroyed, taking the meaning of that word in its popular sense; but we say, to perish implies the final destruction of a thing, so that it shall assume no form, and have no being. That is not the actual meaning of the word here. To perish signifies, literally, to go by, pass away out of sight, so that a man

no longer sees it. But this is not the sense in which it is used here. Here it is used as expressing what is called the perdition of ungodly men; their being sent to a place of torment that is suited to their natures, because they continued finally to rebel against God, and to refuse to be saved. We learn from this, that the world was in danger of perdition, of this ruin, of this final separation from God, and the glory of his power. This is not said to have been the state of a part of the world merely, of some families, but of the world, of the state of human nature. That human nature might not perish, God, therefore, gave his Son. Consequently, he must have designed the salvation of the whole.

How any man can read God's Book, and not see this, I cannot comprehend. It is the strangest thing to me, that there should be a soul that could bear the thought of the thing being possible, that God ever could have determined to pass by a human soul, and leave it to perish without redemption. Those who can believe this, have a comprehension which I am strangely unacquainted with.

Men were in danger of hell fire, because they had sinned, because they had broken the law which sentenced them to perdition. The first object is to save them from the consequences of breaking that law; for this purpose the Lord Jesus became a sacrificial offering. I need not tell you, that the redemption of man from hell, and of course the pardon of his sin, that he may not be liable to hell, is everywhere attributed to the shedding of the blood of Jesus; nor is there any rule of interpretation, I hold it in the face of earth and hell, by which it can be proved, that the terms applied in the New Testament to the redemption of the world by the sacrificial death of Christ, can be understood of anything else. There must be a "wire-drawing," and not only so, but a "cart-

rope drawing," to break down the battlements of heaven, in order to bring in this doctrine, that a man can be saved without a sacrificial offering.

The evil that was intended to be removed was the greatest that can possibly exist, and God designed the gift to be the greatest that God could bestow. I am justified in saying this, because of the Person who was sacrificed, and because of the Person who planned this redemption. But this is only the negative part of the salvation. We think it a grand thing not to go to hell; but if I cannot go to heaven, it seems to me a matter of little consequence, if I go to hell. What is merely an exemption from a hell of fire, if I am not to have an eternity of glory? And yet the first member of this sentence intimates, that the sacrificial offering was to procure exemption from hell fire. "O then," say you, "we must necessarily go to heaven,"—"that they might not perish!". We find in the Scriptures two grand acts of God necessary, in order to accomplish this purpose.

First, the *sacrificial death*, in order to save man from the consequences of his crimes; and, Second, the *regenerating influences* of the Spirit of God, particularly and essentially given by the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to purge the conscience, to purify the mind, to ennoble the human spirit, to impress the image of God upon it, and to prepare it for the heaven originally designed for it. This salvation is attributed to these two things—The sacrificial death of Christ, and, The Spirit he procured by that death, to purify the souls of men. Hence, two grand doctrines we find in this word of God:—

1. The *justification* of the sinner, or the pardon of sin.
2. The *sanctification* of the sinner, or the purifying of the soul.

By justification, we have an exemption from hell.

By the purifying of the soul we are prepared for heaven, and have everlasting life. It is not enough for God to exempt you from an eternal hell; God, in his love, will give you an eternal heaven. God's love rests not there; there is an eternity of enjoyment for you in his own heaven. You may cry out with our blessed Lord in this place, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

I have but one word more to add, and that is on believing. This is the way that grace is to be received; the way exemption from perdition is to be received; this is the way eternal glory is to be obtained.

"That they who believe on him."

What does this imply? In the contemplation of the common sense of my audience, what does believing on him imply? No man will say, it is merely believing there was such a person. What effect could this have upon the soul of man? upon the conscience? None in the world. What is the plain scriptural meaning of the word believing? The plain scriptural meaning is simply this. They that *trust* on Jesus Christ thus provided, thus offered, as the sacrificial Saviour of the world. They that trust in that death, on this merit, they shall not perish, but have everlasting life. They that believe on him as having died for the world, as living at the right hand of God, interceding for the transgressors. "They that believe on him shall not perish;" for they will find he will communicate in that believing, this pardon and this purity, and so prepare them for this eternal happiness.

The perfection of the soul is attributed also to this faith in Christ: "He put no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, purifying their hearts by faith." It has been a maxim in the world, that it was necessary

for God to find out a person who had a very great merit, whom he could, consistently with his purity and perfection, make his confident, and to whom he could say, "Because you are my friend, I will *do* so and so, and so to *you*." Such persons say Christian people are taken into covenant with God, on account of the affectionate regard God has for this great Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is false, and it is easily proved to be so; for we find the covenant Abraham entered into with God, respected the great sacrifice which was to be offered for the sin of the world. This is most positively asserted by God himself: "In thee, in thy person, all nations shall be blessed." That was not in consideration of or in reference to him, or in reference to the people that should proceed from him; for the prime object of God's attention in that first covenant made with Abraham, was the Gentile world, because the Gentile world constituted almost the whole world. For what could two hundred miles long, and two hundred miles broad, be in the sight of God, in comparison of the whole world?

Again, my brethré, it is never said in the Old Testament, that they who believe on Abraham should not perish, but have everlasting life; therefore that grand support of that fine-spun system is instantly pulled away, and it must necessarily fall.

Once more: it is said in the New Testament, that we are to believe on Christ for salvation; to believe that he died for our offences, and is risen for our justification. It is therefore not in consideration of the love that God the Father bears the Son, that he redeems them who believe on that Son, but in consideration that that Son gave himself a sacrifice for sin. Let us then lay this up in our hearts. Are you sinners? Go to God through Christ; believe on his Son; believe, and take the sacrificial death to his throne; that is believing in Christ.

You will find salvation on his account, for his sake. Through that sacrificial merit God can forgive you all that is past, and send forth the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, so as to purify the thoughts of your hearts, that you may perfectly love him ; and therefore you shall not perish, but have everlasting life. O may God give us this redemption from perdition, and this everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SERMON LIII.

### THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE.

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MATTHEW VI. 33, 34.

33. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

THE doctrine contained in the verses that I have read to you is that which we call the doctrine of Providence; the lesson inculcated is, to trust in that Providence; and the encouragement given, is an assurance drawn from the goodness of God; from his eye being over all things; from his love to mankind, that we shall not trust in him in vain. The particular objects contained in these verses, in reference to which we stand in especial need of divine help, and in reference to which, also, God has here given us "exceeding great and precious promises," are the support of body and soul: the support of our lives while travelling through our present dangerous path, and those things that are necessary to save the soul unto eternal life. There is likewise one grand duty enjoined upon us (if I may call it a duty, for it is, in fact, the highest privilege we can possibly possess), that we should seek God, and seek an interest in his salvation; that

this should be our first care, that about this our most earnest thoughts and our strongest desires should be employed, and that we should take care to live by the day, or live, as it were, by the moment ; for we know not how much of what is called futurity we shall be permitted to participate in ; and hence we should stand every moment prepared to meet our God.

Now all these are very important subjects. There is no person, I suppose, in this chapel on whose mind rests the slightest doubt as to the being of a God. It is certainly a great point to have the mind firmly fixed on this subject ; to have no doubt left relative to the existence of God ; and it is equally necessary that we should wisely consider what he is, whom we believe to be the first of all things, and the source of all beings ; that we should consider well those particular properties that are attributed to him, and which we call his attributes ; properties that are the perfection of his nature, and which must essentially dwell in him ; such as his unlimited power, his infinite knowledge, and his eternal goodness. These are three points, that, in considering the being of God, we should always keep in view. It is by these attributes, as we designate them, that his being is known to us ; for what we see are the effects of his unlimited power ; what he has declared in this sacred book, the Bible, is the effect of his infinite knowledge ; and what we see of reason in man, or anything approaching to reason in animals, is derived from God, as the Fountain of knowledge ; and whatsoever good we find upon the earth, whatsoever good happens, as we term it, to man, or to the lower parts of creation, is the effect of eternal goodness. As all these things tend to the prosperity and welfare of man, we argue from the whole, that God has an infinite intensity of love to his human offspring ; that there is nothing his power can



effect, nothing his wisdom can plan, nothing his goodness can give, that he is not ready to effect, plan, and communicate, because man needs love, and he loves man. If we can fully enter into the conception and reception of these truths, we have a sacred creed on which the foundation of our religion can be laid ; and beginning in this way, we are sure never to go astray.

But after all this is done, it is necessary to consider the *government* of God. We can see his creating power ; all things that exist derive their existence from him ; but we do not sufficiently consider God's preserving power. This is the point which our Lord, in the words before us, particularly inculcates upon us ; the preservation of God's creatures, by means of what is called his *providence*. The word itself, though I believe its general meaning is well enough understood, is not sufficiently comprehended in its particular signification. The providence of God is not a general thing merely ; it has for its objects all particulars that can possibly be conceived : it is not a general rule, or a general care, or a general provision ; but it is a general rule, that has all particulars in it ; it is a general care, that has all attentions in it. This providence has not a reference to the world at large merely, but it has a reference to every particle of matter in the world ; a reference to every human being in the world ; and even a reference to the brute creation. Our Lord, in the words before us, gives us to understand, that even minor animals are the objects of God's care. He clothes the field with its grass, causing it to grow for the support of cattle ; and corn to spring forth for the service of man. In vain might we sow, if God did not give power to the earth to bring forth, and to the seed to vegetate in the earth. If God do not give these means, by which vegetation is brought to its perfection, let us sow as we please ; let us

labour as we may ; let us take what care we can ; we shall have no harvest. But God watches over the grain ; and as he has given it a prolific power, so he takes care, by the dispensation of his providence, to cause the rain to descend from heaven, and the sun to shine, that we may have fruitful seasons ; and consequently have our hearts filled with joy and gladness.

It was this providence that originated the good old custom (a pity it should ever be neglected !) of “saying grace” before and after meat. We do not say grace to bless the meat, as if it were cursed ; for God gives nothing that has a curse in it. There is not a morsel of bread furnished for yourselves or your families, that is not a blessing from the God of heaven. Nor do we pray God to sanctify our food, as if it were unholy ; for it is not so : there is not a grain which grows out of the earth that is unholy, or that is accursed ; on the contrary, it is a part of God’s goodness, a manifestation of his power and love. But we say grace, which, literally rendered, means thanks, to God, for having made a provision for us, and we receive it with thanksgiving to Him who has laid it before us. We do not pray to have a protection for our bodies, or to have our victuals sanctified, so as to remove a curse from them ; but we return thanks to God for our provision, and we entreat him to give us grace, that we may make a proper use of it, and that, by the means of these things, we, and those dependent upon us, may still live, and live to the honour and praise of his grace. When we have finished our repast, we return thanks—which is the same word, implying the same thing—that we have had this food to eat ; that we have been able to eat our meat with thankfulness and singleness of heart, acknowledging that it has come from the hand of God, and that we are “less than the least of all his mercies.”

I am glad to find that this old custom has lately come into more general fashion than it has been for many years. I have been in places where it was almost a reproach for a man to stand up, and acknowledge his Maker. I have taken the liberty to do so, and have been gazed at, as if I were a being come from some other part of God's dominions, and ill calculated to keep polite company. But I find there is a general feeling of piety diffusing itself; that acknowledgment of God, and thanksgiving to him, is now prevailing in all ranks of society. I have seen, in places where some of the royal family have been present, no person has attempted to touch a thing until the royal personage rose at the head of the table, and ordered one of his chaplains to ask a blessing from God. Every man then rose up,—not retaining a sitting posture, as is the case with some very irreligious people, when they are giving thanks to God for the provision he has made; and then, when thanks were returned, at the conclusion of the repast, for food received, every man again rose, because the great personage presiding at the table set the example.\* Formerly this mode was invariably adopted. Perhaps there is hardly a Court in Europe, or a place where any of the royal families in Europe reside, where this is so much a direct and positive custom as in England. We wish other states to have all the piety they can possess; we do not wish to be at the head of all people, as we now are; we wish them to be more holy, and we should be glad to find our neighbours much more holy than we at present are; but I hope, on hearing this statement, we shall all determine, by the grace of God, to excel

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\* Dr. Clarke here refers to his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, with whose patronage he had been honoured, and at whose table he had sat.—EDITOR.

our former selves, and to become more devout and useful.

But, my brethren, to the point,—the *providence* of *God*. God's foresight and God's providence are two different things: the one signifies merely his foreseeing what we want; the other, his providing what we want: that is, he foresees our wants, and he grants a sufficient stock, in order that his creatures, who depend upon him, may have the supply that is necessary. When I spoke a short time ago respecting God's general goodness,\* I told you, that he not only took into view the general state of his creatures, but that he also took into view particular states, and the particular states of individuals; so that we may consider God's eye as upon every man; that God sees every man; that he knows his circumstances; that he knows we are but dust; that he knows what we need for our support, and that the sustenance which is necessary for our bodies he has amply provided; as also, that which is necessary for our souls. We should take very great comfort from the certainty of the fact, that God is looking towards us; that his eye is still upon us, and that we cannot be placed in any circumstances where we are out of his sight.

When we witness want and distress, we have what is called a natural feeling; we pity the sufferer, and we immediately desire to render him our aid. We not only share with him a portion of that which we ourselves possess, but finding that that falls short of relieving, to a sufficient extent, the wants of our fellow-creatures, we endeavour to raise up friends for him; and hence we not only render our personal aid, but, by our influence, we are the means of dispensing many blessings to those

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\* See Sermon XLVI.—EDITOR.

who are in need. But while we have been thus contributing to the relief of our fellow-creatures, we have, perhaps, entirely forgotten that these natural feelings come from God; that the pity we have shown, and the desire we have manifested, was not the natural fruit of the human mind, but that it emanated from a God of pity and compassion. I do not know whether such feelings as these would ever have animated the heart of man, if man had not fallen. Had man remained in his original state, there would have been no necessity for the exercise of pity towards a fellow-being, because no distress would have existed. If man had not fallen from God, there would have been no sin; and consequently none of those effects which result from sin,—suffering, wretchedness, misery, and woe. But this compassion is the effect of a new nature, or a new influence that God gives to the human soul. Hence we may interpret to our own satisfaction that saying of an apostle, “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” It was not before he came into the world that man had that influence; it is not that he has brought it into the world; but it is the immediate fruit of the influence and inspiration of Jesus Christ: it is something supernaturally communicated to the fallen spirit of man; so that all you feel of compassion, all you feel of desire to relieve the distresses and miseries of your fellow-creatures is a new principle implanted in human nature; that came not into the world with man, but was bestowed upon him, and communicated to him, by the influence of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order that we might live in a kind of brotherhood with all mankind, and that every man might feel himself concerned and interested in the welfare of another. This principle is bestowed upon us, and communicated to us, that we may feel there is but

one family; and if God be properly acknowledged, as the Giver of this compassion,—of this pity, it will lead us to consider him as the Father and the Head of this family, and we shall cherish towards each other the feelings of brothers—brothers by the same parents; and feel ourselves indebted to God for those comfortable social feelings, without which we must necessarily live a very retired life.

We should acknowledge God as the giver of life, and then our confidence in him would increase. If he inspire us with these feelings, it is because everything good comes from himself; and when we possess such feelings, we are not without an inspiration from the God of heaven. We are not ignorant that there are persons who would tell us that this is a mere natural feeling. When they define to us what they mean by nature and natural feeling, we shall then, perhaps, be better able to understand than we do now, the separation which they make between what they call natural feeling, and the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. I do not, however, know anything of nature, but as the instrument by which God works, in order to accomplish good and proper purposes; and therefore, all natural feeling, that is good, must necessarily be the result of God working in nature. Wherever we find this good feeling, or influence; whether it be in human, or in any other nature, it must emanate from Him who is the Father of lights: who is the Author of all good; for “every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning.” As we are obliged to acknowledge that we live by God, so we are compelled to confess that we live through him; and every comfortable feeling in what we call our nature, we owe to God, the author of all our mercies. As we are informed that these things come by

Jesus Christ, we acknowledge, in consequence of this good instruction, that God communicates these things to us by Christ Jesus. We have these things on account of the infinite merit of the Lord Jesus, in whom God the Father is well-pleased, and for whose sake we live, and through whom we receive all those graces that change the heart, and prepare it for eternal glory.

Now, my friends, my object in all this—and I think it is Jesus Christ's object in thus teaching, is, to induce you all to put your trust more in God than you ever have done. I do not use the favourite term, *trust in providence*, because providence is not a being; providence is not God; and yet, it is frequently spoken of, as if it were God, or a being by itself, to which we are indebted for all the good that we possess. You will at once see that it is not so to be understood: but providence is the way by which God governs the world: providence is his mode of government: his mode of supplying the wants of his creatures, and preserving their being: and by a continual provision, and a continual communication of that provision, he accomplishes those gracious purposes for which he has given them being, and that, ultimately, they may be prepared, by his grace, for the enjoyment of eternal glory.

This is, properly speaking, the grand lesson for the poor: and as our Lord has said, "The poor ye have always with you;" he intimates by that, that the poor abound, and that the higher orders of society are but few. There are but few persons in the different classes of the community, who constitute the higher orders of society: persons whom we might suppose are independent, because of the great riches they possess. Alas! my friends, we do not look well into this! I doubt not, that you sung the hymn I gave out with much piety towards God, and you have learned from that, that even

kings, the highest order of human beings, receive their power and dignity from the hand of God ; and you will hear a wise man say, that the king himself is a servant : that he is as dependent upon the providence of God for health, and for life, as any of us. But God has chosen to put him in a place in which he has need of a particular influence, and manifestation of God's goodness, and requires a particular provision suited to that state. As it has pleased God to make this order, we know that it must necessarily be from him. But there are only a few kings ; while, on the contrary, there are multitudes of subjects ; multitudes of poor. Wherever you look, you will see a poor man, and, perhaps, see one poorer than yourself. I have lived a long time in the world, and I do not know that I ever saw among the hundreds and thousands of the poor who have, during that period, come under my notice, one who was in the lowest state of distress. There might have been many in a grade below those I saw, though I have seen some, whose life it appeared impossible to preserve, on account of their general destitution of the means of its preservation. Let us magnify God, then, for what he has given us : for most men possess a little, that they can divide with those in deep distress. If we see a poorer man than ourselves, let us thank God that he has given us so much, and let us endeavour to be the instrument in his hand of bestowing a blessing, by dividing it with those who are more wretched than ourselves. God takes care, that the man who exercises the feelings he has inspired, shall never lose anything. God, by his providence, takes cognizance of all transpiring events, and he will take care that that which is lent shall be repaid. God has blessed those who have provided for the poor and needy, and he has given his promise, that he will help them in the time of trouble.



Again, Let us consider, that our foresight, our knowledge, or our experience, are not the rules of God's providence. Let us never suppose, that because our state is brought very low, therefore, we can never rise. Let us not suppose, that because things are beginning to deteriorate, they must go on in deterioration, till at last we are reduced to extreme wretchedness. God brings many down, whom he does not bring entirely down. God wounds many, whom he does not destroy. God afflicts multitudes, but does not permit the affliction to be unto death. No case can exist in which God cannot render us his help.

Farther, Let us consider, that good may still be enjoyed. There is still room for every man to go to his God by prayer ; and though he is brought down to extreme suffering, or to what we may apprehend to be extreme want, still God has power to relieve him ; still God can take away the pain, or give him strength to bear it ; and if he continue it, he will sanctify it to his soul, that he may be enabled to say even here, "In truth and in very faithfulness God hath afflicted me." Then, my friends, never despair of your own case, nor of that of your friends and families. Never look upon your numerous children, and say in your heart, "Oh, how shall they be fed !" Never pore upon your wants, and say, "Oh, how shall they be supplied !" I tell you, there is an eternal God, whose eye is upon you ; and there is not a child on whom God's eye does not rest as much as upon the archangel Michael, or any of the heavenly hosts. Do not begin to say, this child cannot be fed ; or the danger, that is evidently approaching, will be ruinous and overwhelming. No : for God has the command of all things ; he can stop the current of evil ; or he can turn it aside, if he do not choose to stop it. He can either take you out of the way of the current, or

he will turn it out of your way. If you are persons who are found placing your entire dependence on him, remember, that though all blessings of a temporal kind may fail, there are still infinite resources in the wisdom and the goodness of God, and he will take care to supply all that is necessary for those who put their trust in him. After all the clamour that we make concerning want and privations, and our own afflictions, there are thousands who die from surfeiting, from not making a right use of the good things God has given them, for one individual that perishes through the lack of necessities. This, I think, every man by examination, may ascertain. In every part of the creation of God, so abundant is the provision made, in consequence of God seeing what we want, that we find, upon the whole, every creature is fed. Grass continues to grow for cattle, and corn for the service of man.

But, my friends, do you not see that it is for the sake of the human soul that God makes all this manifestation of his power and his goodness? I had almost said, this expenditure of power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy. It is for the welfare of the soul that tabernacles in the human body, that this provision is made: and hence, he says to us, when teaching us to depend upon him, and to look to him for the supply of our necessary wants, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

What is the kingdom of God? Is it the kingdom of glory? No; for, indeed, our Lord was not talking about that. He uses the term very frequently, but seldom employs it in reference to the glories of eternity. The kingdom of God is God's government of man. The kingdom of God is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The kingdom of God is to have Jesus Christ establishing his empire in the hearts of men. Hence, we find, in his preaching, that he announces the

kingdom of God as being at hand : not the kingdom of glory, for that will not take place till after the general resurrection : but he tells those to whom he addressed himself, that the kingdom of God was at hand : and he says, further, "The kingdom of God is among you." It is, however, better known to us, as being "righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost," existing in the human soul. Now why is this called the kingdom of God ? Why, because God is its governor ; in the same way, that this is called the kingdom of England, or Great Britain, because William IV. is the king of it, and, under God, governs these united kingdoms. We call it so, because it is supported and directed by his government. There are a vast many agents, all employed under the king, dispensing justice, and conferring protection through the different classes of society ; taking care of the whole, because, in thus protecting the whole, the safety of the whole is concerned and secured. So, my friends, where there is righteousness and peace, and where there is joy in the Holy Ghost, all must come from God. These are considered as the way in which God dispenses his blessings, and by which what is called his kingdom is established and supported ; that is, his reign among men. Now we are to look that the kingdom of God shall be established amongst us. From the way in which this word is frequently used, we find that a family—strange as it may appear, may have this kingdom ; that a family may have the kingdom of God in their own house ! but God goes lower than this : "The kingdom of God is within *you*." An individual may have this kingdom, because it implies the sole government of the thing, the place, the person, or persons, by God himself. If a family, by the power of the Christian religion, have received the communications of divine grace : if they have received, by the blood of Christ the pardon of their sins,

and the sanctification of their nature, the kingdom of God is there ; because Jesus daily governs their hearts, and influences their lives : and there is an evidence of his government. He governs that family as he governs the whole of his church. If we find a man, who has turned from his sins, who formerly was a drunkard, a liar, a sabbath-breaker, an unclean person, and so on, but has now become righteous, holy, and humble ; a man of prayer, faith, love, peace, charity, temperance, virtue, and mercy, why, God rules *in* him ; and all the powers of his soul are subjugated by the grace of God : every high thought is brought down ; and the purity, love, and peace of God is manifested in his soul, and dwells in his heart. Wherever our king's influence is felt, that is the kingdom of our monarch. There is the kingdom of England, which is one kingdom, governed by this one king. There is the kingdom of Scotland, which is another kingdom, but is governed by the same king. So, in whatsoever small portion of God's dominions his grace is manifested, even in the small isles of the sea ; the Shetland Isles, for instance, where only ten or twelve persons may be found, who can be considered as the inhabitants of the island : if they are depending on God, there is God's kingdom ; and God is as much the king of that island, possessing only a handful of men, as he is the king of Great Britain, or the king and sovereign over all the rest of his immense empire. And, in like manner, God is king of the man in whose heart he dwells.

Now observe, our Lord says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." What is this righteousness ? We have seen that the kingdom of God includes every place in which God governs ; but we have not particularly looked into the means by which he governs. The term righteousness involves every right

temper, every right desire, every holy principle. We must not take up with some fanciful information, that we have derived from some particular creed, and say, God's righteousness means so and so. It means his image in man: it means the life of God in the soul; it means nothing without, and it means nothing in another, in reference to you; it means the almighty power of God, living in the soul, changing the human heart, and reigning by righteousness and true holiness within. It is not the holiness, the purity, and eternal perfection of the sacrifice Christ has offered; of the Spirit he has promised, and of all his operations in the soul of man merely: it includes all this, but then, this righteousness must be implanted within you. Some have said, then it is not Christ's righteousness, but ours, if we receive it. Poor soul! it is not your life that is in you; nor that of any other man: no; God is the Author and the preserver of your life: "In him we live, and move, and have our being." If he did not continually afford you his influence, you could neither live, move, nor breathe. Though we call it your life, it is a life that you have from God. And though we find a righteous man, and say, he is a righteous man, we neither conceive that his righteousness was acquired by himself, nor that it can exist by itself. No, the man that has this righteousness receives the principle from the God of heaven; and it requires the continual influence of the indwelling of Christ, to preserve it in the soul when he has given it. The righteousness of God is never found dwelling in the human heart, but by God dwelling in the heart; and it is he who dispenses and keeps up the influence, by his continued energy in the soul. You must not expect, then, that you have anything detached from God; any thing without God: no; you must have God, and the principle with him.

This is what our blessed Lord refers to in that part of the text, where he says, "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." The first ideas that meet us are, evil and protection ; there is a certain quantum of evil or want that must be supplied ; an evil that must be driven away, a want that must be supplied recurring every day. We should not ask for grace this day, to support us to-morrow. If we live till to-morrow, we must carry on our system of prayer and dependence upon God.

Then again, it is said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you ;" that is, superadded ; added, in fact, in order to preserve the other. You have read these words of the prophet : "On all thy glory shall be a defence." If there be a grace that God communicates to the soul of man, this power must be exercised to support that grace. There is one character given of the Saviour of the world, that is not well attended to. The name JESUS signifies—and the two significations that I am about to point out, are essential to the word,—Saviour and Preserver ; for the word, in its root, signifies literally, to save and to preserve. It is not merely necessary that Jesus should save us from this and the other evil, but that he should preserve us in that state of salvation. You have something like this in your little church catechism, where the person has been taught to see the kindness of God in calling him to be a Christian, and having a name given to him, when baptized in the Christian faith ; and when he is taught to praise God who has brought him into this state of salvation ; a state in which saving power is commonly manifested, and this necessarily implies preservation. In this saving state, we must look for the grace that saves ; that is, we must look for the grace that preserves. Many are glad to run to the Lord Jesus for

redemption in his blood, when they are afraid of falling into hell-fire ; and it is not wonderful that they should, because, without him they must perish for ever ; but after they have received communications from him, and have had the Spirit to witness with their spirits that they were the children of the living God, how many of them have lost the grace they had received, by merely dwelling upon the wonderful change wrought in their soul ; looking at it with astonishment, till at last they forgot to look to him who gave the grace ! If there be not a defence, the soul may soon be lost. There may be a glory, but if the Lord place no defence in that glory, it will soon be extinguished ; so that you must take Jesus with you as a Saviour, and keep Jesus with you as a preserver. Do not suppose, for a moment, that you are safe, or that you can be saved at all, if you are not brought into an acquaintance with Jesus through the pardoning love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost. Take up Jesus as your Saviour from guilt, and as the preserver of your souls in the state of salvation into which he has brought you. In these two respects look to him ; let your faith act upon him in reference to this character : live to him, and he will live in you, and walk in you ; daily bringing forth fruit unto life eternal.

Now with respect to temporal things, how much of them can we expect ? Last Sunday, I felt myself forced among a poor people, to represent to them the goodness of God, and to show them that there was a great deal of want and misery in the world, that never came in the order of God's providence at all ; and that there were many wants among particular persons, and particular families, which God did not determine should be there ; and therefore, might have been avoided. I showed them that men themselves, by making an improper use of

God's mercies, strip themselves, as it were of God's blessings, and keep themselves in a state of absolute and unnecessary poverty, because they continue in sin, or transgression against God, or make an improper use of the bounties he supplies: that they are not workers together with God. I am sure there are far more evils in the world, even of a natural kind, than should exist. All the evil I see is not the effect merely of the fall. If I see a man that I know to be a drunkard, and by and by, I find him impaired in health; whereas, before he gave himself up to intemperate drinking, he was able to do a day's work: able to digest the food which the providence of God gave him, and derived strength from his food, and was able to be at his work the next day, and thus go on through the journey of life; but that now his weak stomach begins to reject food, its powers are enfeebled by the intoxicating draught: if I find this man, in consequence of indigestion, receiving no nourishment; his legs becoming thin, and scarcely able to support the weight of his emaciated frame; his flesh wasting away, and the whole machinery of the frame unnourished: then all the miseries which that man endures, are the consequences of his own transgressions against God; and not one of these need to have been experienced, unless we could say, he could not avoid drunkenness; and then he could not avoid pains in his stomach, wasting in his flesh, failure in his strength, and coming to premature death. We dare not say so; or if we did, we should speak blasphemy. He had power to avoid the evil, which was the first cause; and then the effects necessarily arising from such a cause would not have had their existence. When I see that God has provided grace to save man from his sinful propensities, I tell you that you have no need to get drunk; I tell you that you have no need to take anything into your stomach which will



impair your digestive organs. You find there is no necessity for it, why then do you do so? There is no necessity for the disease that comes upon the drunkard; no necessity for his family, his relations, to have been afflicted by him at all; and now, bad as his case is, there is a remedy: perhaps he may never be restored to the fulness of his strength; the consequences of his departure from God may attend him to the latest day of his existence; and perhaps, in the end he will be obliged to acknowledge, that he is about to die sooner than he needed to have done; but if he apply to God for the forgiveness of his sin, and he blots it out, he may give him partial health and strength, and may manifest his blessings in his soul. He will do it; and if there are any of this class here, he will heal *your* sin; and he will so far strengthen your body, that you will be enabled to make the best of life, that possibly can be made out of it, in your present circumstances. I have known, indeed, in many cases, a constitution exceedingly debilitated, and, in fact, brought into a state in which it appeared that the disease could not be removed; and yet the man, when he has turned to God with his whole heart, has recovered; so that God has added the blessing of health, which the man had destroyed by intemperance, when he sought the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Again, my friends; this is a general promise. I told you with respect to goodness, that generals always imply particulars. Here is a general promise, that ALL these things,—food, raiment, and everything that is necessary for the comfort and the support of life, shall be added. I dare not limit this promise. Can you say, before your Maker, “Lord, I may seek thee with my whole heart, and find thee not: I may experience thy mercy in Christ Jesus, and yet none of these things may be added to me?” I dare not make such a declaration against so flat a pro-

mise ; against so broad and explicit a statement, as the particulars specified in the context ! I dare not lift up my voice in such awful presumption ! I see that, if we give ourselves to God, he will give us health, and the means of preserving it ; and we need not be half so poor as we are. I would trust God's word, through a flaming world ; and if he should say, "Go forward, and dash through the flame,—I will preserve thee," I would do so. If he tell me that, notwithstanding all my sin, he will be gracious to me ; that he will remove the pinching hand, and give me the means by which I may be able to "provide things honest in the sight of all men ;" why then I would dare to trust an unfailing God. I would plead the promise ; I would bring it to his throne ; I would approach him through the blood that was shed for me ; and I would plead that promise and that blood with the great God, and I should not fear that God would grant me what was necessary. Indeed, if a man be not faithful to walk with his Maker, we may say, as a good man once did, who was much afflicted, and very poor (and he put it on the right ground), "I am much afflicted, I am in bad health, and I am very poor." "Well, that is a pity," said the individual to whom he was addressing himself. "Oh," replied the poor man, "God sees that he can neither trust me with health nor money ; and therefore, I am an afflicted, and poor person." Now this is the extreme case, where I should think this promise may apparently fail ; where God sees he can neither trust us with health nor with money ; and therefore we may continue in those circumstances as long as we live. But why should he not trust us ? Because we are not steady to his covenant. Why should we not trust him ? If we have proper trust in him, we shall receive all the strength we need, and he will take care to strengthen us for the day of trial ; and, as we have frequently prayed,

“make the back, at all times, equal to the burden he lays upon it.”

We ought to take up these things in a proper light. Do not give way to carking care. Do not give way to unbelief; that is the way to bind all these burdens upon your back for ever. Do not doubt God's goodness; he is a good God, and will be so to you, and to all men. Do not doubt the fulfilment of God's promises; as sure as he is God, he will fulfil his engagements. If they appear to fail, it is not his fault, but yours, because you do not trust him. But think upon his word, and plead it with him. Think upon his grace, and God will take care that everything necessary, both for your soul and your body, shall be your portion. I would not have you, for a moment, forget Him from whom all blessings proceed. I have no notion of any kind of access to the throne of God, but through Jesus. How many excellent people (in their way) can make prayer and supplication to God, and have no Jesus, through whose infinite merits they approach the throne of God, is to me a perfect mystery! I have no notion of coming into the presence of the Eternal Spirit, of whom we can have no conception whatever, but by the effects of his being; that is, by his attributes; approaching his wisdom, his goodness, his power, and so forth, without anything to attract his notice. It may be said, why, our miseries will attract his notice: true, they may; but if he can see no miseries in us, but those we have brought upon ourselves, it may attract the notice of his justice, and our perdition may be the consequence. If I have as much reason to believe that my crimes will speak as strong in the ears of justice, as my miseries will speak to his mercy, unless God have a reason, and an infinite one too, why he should show me mercy and not justice, then I have reason to expect that I shall have justice and not mercy. On what ground.

then, may I expect mercy? Why, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Now for his sake, and on account of the infinite merit of the sacrifice he has offered for you, and for every human being, God can still be infinitely just, and yet be the justifier, the free forgiver of every soul that comes to him through the Son of his love. Therefore, when you take him with you, and take his sacrifice; if ever you took a reason into the presence of God—why God should show you mercy, why he should blot out your sin—why he should save your souls, I will tell you plainly, that is the appointed way. "The holy child Jesus" is the one thing necessary for your eternal life.

I suppose you have now received as many lessons as are likely to do you good throughout the week; and there are some of them that you may carry with you through life. I have spoken to you of dividing your bread with the poor, I dare say you have often done so. I have come that I might have an opportunity of preaching Jesus, and that you might have an opportunity of receiving the gospel. Remember that his eye is upon us for good. But those who have called me to preach, have requested us to support their hands in liquidating the debt upon this place of worship, and paying the demands that are resting upon it.\* I should, of course, press this request upon you, but if you have felt the

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\* The occasion, as will be perceived, on which Dr. Clarke preached, was to relieve the trustees of a chapel; and during the latter part of his life, he rarely preached without a collection being made at the close of the service. He was either specially invited for the purpose, or the friends took good care to fix their more regular collections on the day on which he was appointed to be at the

truth of what I have said, there will be no need for pressing that point. What a mercy it would be to have a chapel built, if only one gospel sermon were preached in it, and five hundred or one thousand people, heard from the lips of God's ambassador, the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, on whom we immediately depend for salvation ! Do you think I am so unbelieving, that I have so little knowledge of the great good conferred by God's word, as to suppose you will go away from this place nothing the better for this exercise ? You will be bettered by it, and perhaps, hundreds to all eternity. It is God's word, and it cannot be spoken in God's name in vain. Whatsoever comes from him, and is directed to him, in the invitations of his mercy and his truth, God will particularly own ; and why should not some afflicted soul reap fruit this day from what you have heard ? Surely, you will ? May God make the seed to vegetate in every heart, and may it be watered from on high, and ever bring forth fruit to the glory of his name !

Well, then, this is that day in the year that is called the anniversary of the chapel ; and on this day a collection is to be made to assist in bearing its expenses throughout the year. This is the object I am called upon to commend to you this morning ; and though it comes but one day in the course of the year, no man is expected to give anything but through the love of God dwelling in his heart, and his desire to have that love preached to others. This is one of God's sanctuaries, where his Word is proclaimed, and where the people come to hear

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place. For this, as well as for some other sermons, the public are indebted to the same gentleman to whom they are indebted for many of the sermons of the late Rev. R. Watson, as published in his works.—EDITOR.

it. Would you wish it to be kept open? You would be sorry to come this day twelvemonth, and find it fallen down, or in the hands of those who do not mention the name of Jesus at all, or turned into a warehouse. Such an event would distress every one of you. It will not, however, be so, because we will help these poor men on whom the burden lies. I have contributed my part by this labour, and you will do yours by taking part of the burden off their shoulders; not for their sakes, nor for the sake of their families, but for the sake of the public; for it is an act of philanthropy, and we will support them in it. Let them see that God has laid it upon their hearts, and that the whole burden shall not be laid upon their shoulders. Amen.

## SERMON LIV.

### THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST, THE PROOF OF HIS DIVINITY.

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MATT. xi. 2—6.

2. "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ he sent two of his disciples,

3. "And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ?

4. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see :

5. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them ;

6. "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

IF we can receive, as true, the words of a holy man, "that no portion of God's word is heard to profit, unless it is heard in the spirit in which it was originally dictated," it will lead us to lift up our hearts to God, and to implore the Spirit of wisdom and truth, to direct us in hearing at this time. The meaning of the words is simply this : unless a man be under a less or greater measure of the unction of God's Spirit, he cannot apprehend the meaning and importance of the doctrines of God ; and it requires a measure of that spirit which the Holy Spirit imparts, and of that wisdom which the

Spirit gives, to give understanding and feeling to the soul under the ministry of the word of life.

You heard, in the second lesson this morning, a remarkable portion from Jesus Christ himself; speaking of these doctrines to the people, he says, “Take heed how you hear;” take heed in what spirit you hear, and what is the object which you have in view in hearing. See that you have a proper object in view, and that you are under proper motives; because every one, as another Scripture tells us, either gains or loses; “to him that hath shall be given:” that is, that uses what he hath; “and from him that hath not”—that does not use what he hath—from him “shall be taken away.” I do not know how you feel under declarations of this kind; but, I trust, you feel very solemn. We either grow wiser or more ignorant in the concerns of salvation, by every sermon we hear, and by every chapter we read. We have come here this morning, either to lose a measure of what God has already wrought for us, or to gain a measure. There is no other way in which these declarations can consistently be understood.

You have heard, and seriously I hope, the words just now read over to you: John, the forerunner of our Lord, the person who came by divine appointment, and by a particular prophecy,—for the thing was determined long before of the Almighty, to prepare the way of Jesus Christ, and to be the connecting link between the opening of the kingdom of God by the gospel, and the shutting up of the Mosaic institutions,—they having accomplished the purposes for which God gave them; this person came to prepare the way of the Lord, preaching the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins. Mark that. He preached to the people that they should repent, because the Lord God was about to manifest among them the long-expected Messiah; he who could remit



sins, and whose kingdom was to be thus manifested upon earth, by displaying a token of his mercy by the remission of the sins of his people. He proclaimed the necessity of repentance, and that every person who repented of his sins was to show the sincerity of his repentance, by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance ; by acting, so as to evidence, that they had thoroughly penitent hearts ; therefore, he required universal reformation in the manners of the people.

This man, for this strange doctrine of righteousness, was repeatedly opposed by the powerfully wicked ; and we find him, for this testimony, cast into prison. His work was the work of God ; while God permitted him to be at liberty, he was faithful to his trust, and is called by his master “ a burning and shining light.” He had disciples, persons who constantly attended on him ; these disciples, it appeared, loved their master. He gave every proof of his uprightness, every proof of his divine mission. Though exposing themselves to persecution, and loss of life, they clung to him ; they are found with him in prison ; not detained there, but visiting him as their master, and receiving his instructions. In the economy of providence, I cannot help remarking the liberty afforded these persons to attend on their master. But there are certain circumstances in the case of the Baptist that cleared him of all suspicion of having evil designs ; Herod could have no doubt concerning the purity of his motives. It was to oblige a wicked woman that he was put in prison. He had now been a considerable time in it ; he had not heard of the manifestation of the Messiah in the way he had expected.

There is nothing clearer than this, that John the Baptist did expect Jesus Christ to manifest himself, at his appearing, in a different way to what he really did. Though wise, and wiser in the things of salvation than

those that had preceded him, yet he had not that information which those with Jesus Christ had ; therefore it is said, though a greater had not risen than John the Baptist, yet the least of those with Jesus Christ was greater than he. We need not wonder, if many doubts had entered the Baptist's mind concerning the person he had borne testimony to, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." And the surest way to get his doubts removed, and to get information, was, to send his disciples to Christ himself, that he might find whether he was the Messiah, or only some great prophet. Probably it was in reference to the doubts that narrowed this holy man's mind, that our Lord said, "Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me ;" blessed is the man who shall not stumble at my mission, and with the way in which I conduct myself, because I do not assume that secular dignity which the Jews expected, as the Messiah, I should assume. His disciples came, and told Jesus that John had sent them. At that time various defiled and diseased persons were brought before him, and with a word, or a touch, he healed them ; and when John's disciples came to him with, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ?" he said, "Go and tell John what ye hear and see ; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised up."

These things are recorded for our instruction ; and it appears to me, the best method to discourse upon them is, first, simply to allude to those facts which our Lord alleged as proofs of his being the promised Messiah ; if we find that he is determinately such, we may, secondly, consider what is implied by those words of his, by which he concludes his declaration to the disciples of John, "the poor have the gospel preached to them."

First, The facts which are alleged as proofs of his being the promised Messiah: "The blind receive their sight," &c.

You have all, I suppose, read the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, where it particularly speaks of the advent of the Messiah; and where it tells you, that by his causing the eyes of the blind to be opened, and the ears of the deaf to be unstopped, the lame man to leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, he should be proved to be this divinely appointed person. Now, all the prophets bore testimony to him; and our Lord referred to the intimations which had been given by the prophets concerning himself. The Jews believed that the prophets were inspired by God, and therefore were persons who could not be deceived, and who could not lie; hence, their testimony was sufficient in this case, if it were allowed they bore testimony to these facts. As to miracles, it is an allowed point among all mankind that no man can work a miracle, but that it is the work of God, though God is pleased to make use of man to effect it; and that, therefore, the power or energy necessary is of God.

I will here state what I mean by a miracle. A miracle is a thing done contrary to the laws of nature, or anything the laws of nature are incapable of producing; an impossibility as to man; so that no creature of finite, or limited powers, can possibly perform such a work. The things our Lord refers to are of this kind. There is no power that can give sight to the blind. There is no agent in heaven, or in earth, that can cause a lame man immediately to walk. None such can cleanse, immediately, a leper. None in heaven or in earth can make, in a moment, the deaf to hear. None can raise up the dead. All these seem to be effects, if produced at all, of the simple power of the living God: they argue that

universal control over nature, and that energy in nature, that none but the Supreme Eternal Being, over all, in all, and through all, can possibly effect. We have accounts in the Gospels of persons born blind, and of persons who had lost their sight. They who were incapable of seeing, and who had lost their sight, came to the Lord Jesus, in order to recover their sight; and those born blind, in order to get it. Miracles of this kind were immediately wrought; and wrought in this manner, that though Jesus Christ chose to exert his influence in a gradual way, yet it was in such a way as to prove nature not to have had any hand in it. If we had seen any man coming forward, and saying, "I can immediately produce sight to the blind," and this man made use of no medical aid, but either spake, "Receive sight," or did something so evidently incapable of helping forward the great design, that the thing was not less the power of God, than if it were done in a moment, we should conclude it to be supernatural. You will perceive, that I refer here to the putting clay on the man's eyes, and commanding him to wash; and to his touching the man's eyes, and he saw men as trees walking; that is, he saw very indistinctly; and to his touching his eyes again, at which time he looked up, and saw things clearly. In this we see an economy worthy of God himself; that, unless he had wrought another miracle, the power of light thrown upon the eye would again have destroyed the sight; and it would have required another miracle upon the body to enable the body to support the effect of the miracle itself. Our Lord could have restored this man to sight in a moment; but he chose to do it in the way here mentioned, as he never works a miracle where natural causes will do.

Again, suppose you beheld a lame man brought into the presence of this person; suppose his foot to be

dislocated, or luxated ; suppose such a natural impediment in some of his limbs that, unless it were removed, the man could not walk ; what would you think of the person that restored him in a moment ? What would you think of that power which immediately made straight the leg or ankle, and restored the dislocated joint ? And suppose you took up the hypothesis of Gilbert Wakefield, who has proved, in his note on this passage, that the term signifies those who had lost their limbs ; not those who were merely lame, but those, I say, who had *lost* their limbs ; and that these persons, coming up without legs or arms, and appearing before Jesus Christ, had them immediately restored by his power ! the arm reproduced where it was lost ! What should we have thought ? But suppose you leave this criticism, which yet, I will not consent to give up, and come to the simple case of a lame hand and arm—the withered arm, where the muscular substance had dried away—and he commanded the man to stand out in the congregation, and to stretch out his arm, and the whole natural energy was restored, which had not existed in it before. Here was a manifest creation, then, by his power, of muscular substance, in order to restore the arm to the state of the other arm. What could we have thought of this ?

I will bring forward another case : the deaf hearing ; a person incapable of hearing any sound ; not one whose ears were only stopped ; not an impediment merely to be removed ; but the person was so thoroughly deaf that he was incapable of hearing and speaking, and by Christ's putting his fingers in his ears, the man heard distinctly. And another case : a man could not speak at all ; he touched his tongue, and the man spake distinctly.

Hear another case : A man dead, and who had been dead four days. In that country it was impossible to preserve the body long from putrefaction ; and it is very properly

marked in these words, "By this time he stinketh." In this case a double miracle must be wrought; first, the body must be restored, which is now in a state of putrefaction, in order that it may be capable of performing the functions of life, when resuscitated; and another, in order that the soul may be brought out of the invisible state, and reunited with it. What a proof was this of unlimited power!

Suppose another person to come up, and he is a leper, covered over with a loathsome disease. In those countries, it is allowed, that such a disorder is incurable by any help of man; and I venture to assert that no man, even in this day, has found out a method of curing it. There is not a man in the world at this day able to cure it. I say this without any disrespect to any of my medical friends who are present; I assert it without the fear of being successfully contradicted. This person, by a single word, was restored to perfect soundness; so that his whole body was restored to purity and healthiness.

By a word he called the dead man out of his grave, and he was living afterwards among his neighbours and friends. And this is notorious in the country, that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; and that these are performed by that wonderful man called Jesus Christ, lately manifested in the land preaching salvation to the lost.

Now, without any system whatever, without any predisposing creed, leaving all creeds out of the question—leaving all the evidence of this blessed book out of the question—leaving everything but common sense and reason out of the question—we must have come to this conclusion: However disguised, he is the everlasting God, and has unlimited power. An infinite energy must be in all this. Nature is very different in its

operations. Nature's operations are dependent on millions of operations ; effects flowing from causes, and becoming causes in their turn, from which effects flow. And therefore nature, to accomplish its purposes, must have a first before it can have a second operation, and a second before a third, and so on. It must go through all before we can have the result. I say, my brethren, that the evidence of the Godhead of this person is so evident in this person, that it appears to me an insult upon the human understanding to doubt that he must be the eternal God, however disguised his appearance, who could do those things.

I judged it necessary to call your attention to these great facts, because I think that everything that forms human belief, on gospel principles, is necessarily built on this doctrine.

Brethren, if all these things were done, and if they were done in the way stated by the inspired penmen, who, without comment, merely mention the fact, we argue that the person who did them was what we have stated, and that consequently this person had authority to teach anything, and to command anything, and also had authority to do anything. It follows, his doctrines are necessarily true ; his commands are necessarily such as flow from infinite authority ; and all the children of men must be necessarily considered as his creatures, and are to obey him in whatever way he commands. And if we can prove that the persons to whom the promises are made, have no claims on his justice, then the promises must flow from infinite mercy. And he who is an infinitely good God, and an infinitely just and righteous God, will not fail in fulfilling any of the promises he has made to the children of men—for by any promise God is bound as much as any man is bound by putting his hand to any writing.

These disciples were commanded to tell John what they had seen, and the doctrines they had heard our Lord preach. I conceive this is the command of God to all his followers, especially to all his ministers. I must conceive them to be such persons as are employed by the Almighty, to prepare the way of Jesus Christ to the hearts of men ; and our great business is to tell the people what we have seen and what we have heard, and to bring these reasons why we believe the everlasting gospel that is proclaimed to them in the authority of the word of God. Being in the place of one at the present time, it is my business to fulfil that commission on the present occasion.

We have seen the miracles Jesus Christ has wrought, we have heard the doctrines Jesus Christ has taught. I am come to tell you, secondly, what Christ has wrought, and what Christ has taught, and to sum up all in this declaration of our Lord, "The poor have the gospel preached to them."

What the gospel is, every person knows ; no one is unacquainted with that word. The gospel of Jesus Christ we generally take to be the religion of Jesus Christ ; more especially the manifestation God has given to the world, in promising the remission of sins to them that believe in Jesus Christ, who was manifested to take away sins. We say, it signifies good news, or glad tidings ; and can we conceive anything to answer this character more than the gospel ? God tells you all you have sinned and come short of his glory. What do we understand by the latter term ? Coming short of the glory of his kingdom ; consequently not entering that kingdom, having no right to that kingdom. Being short of God's glory, we are miserable and wretched ; and if we remain in this state, we shall be miserable and wretched for ever. The gospel informs us that Jesus



Christ was manifested in the flesh ; that he died for the redemption of man ; that he offered himself a sin-offering for man, whose life divine justice required, because man had sinned against God. God has assured us, that he so loved the world, that he has given his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish. And this word is a declaration to you, as it was to your fathers, and will be to your children and your children's children, that though we have sinned against heaven, and before him, and are in danger of perishing everlastingly, God, in his endless mercy, offers pardon to all—offers to forgive the miser, the drunkard, the sabbath-breaker, the swearer, the unclean person. He offers to save you from all the evils you have brought upon yourselves—offers to save you from the bitter pains of eternal death—offers to bring you to his eternal state of glory—and in order to this, to purify you to himself, that you may serve him here. Can you conceive anything more glorious than this ? Is it possible to hear anything that can excite your affections more than this ?

When will tumult cease in the world ? When will this rage for blood have an end ? \* When will the passions of men cease to nerve their arms to murder each other ? In this age of expectation, while God's judgments have been abroad in the earth, and you have daily waited the result of every fearful conflict, has any man darted across your way, and sounded in your ears, Jesus Christ died for sinners ! Jesus came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. He came to make you sons and daughters of God, without rebuke, that you might shine as lights, in the midst of a crooked and per-

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\* It was just at the close of the continental struggle that this sermon was delivered in Queen St. Chapel, London.—EDITOR.

verse world. He came to save you from your sins, that you might be delivered out of the hands of your enemies. He came to rescue you from sinking into the bottomless pit, and to bring you to the heights of eternal glory. Did you hear this? Did any man speak to you with this intelligence, Jesus Christ died for you? Did any interrupt your newspaper reading with glad tidings like this? Did he inform you that your case was not so hopeless as at first view it might appear? Did any one say that to you repentance and remission of sins was preached, and that you might lay hold on the hope set before you, and find eternal life? Did you not rejoice in this? Did you not say, "This is good news." If it were not so common, why not ring out joy-bells in the land? not so much to call the people together, but to testify the obligation we feel to the God of heaven and earth for sending his Son to die for us. O what a length of time has this wondrous gospel been preached to us! If the offers of mercy and salvation were made to the damned in hell, if they had but five minutes, with a possibility of receiving the gospel, how gladly would they embrace it? Would there be a damned soul continue in its destiny? No, not one in that hell of fire. But their probation is past, yours is continued, and your probation is the term of life. You are called to believe on the Son of God, that you may be saved. Do any of you prefer anything of an earthly kind, that is called by the name of good, to an eternity of glory? Do any of you prefer the friendship of a human being to the approbation of the Almighty God? Do you prefer the gratification of evil passions, which on reflection you cannot but hate—the gratification of evil desires, that you cannot but condemn yourselves for—do you prefer these to eternal glory? to the peace of God that passeth under-

standing in this world, and eternal felicity in the next? Who would prefer these to the having the heart filled with God, and regulated by his Spirit—to the having the mind that was in Christ—to the being filled with gentleness and purity? Surely none can prefer it, however practically they may seem to do it. It is in the absence of reflection of this kind. You require men to call upon you to consider your ways ; and you consider in consequence, not only the immediate results, but the consequences, the relations you are about to acquire ; you consider all the links of the chain, and you see the last link fastened to the burning throne of the fiend of hell.

It is said by our Lord, “the poor have the gospel preached to them.” Oh what a word is this ! We see, in society, the great majority of mankind are poor. But let me be permitted to banish from your minds the distinctions among men, the various degrees, and the subordinations which those various degrees imply, without which there would be no peace or order in society ; let me, I say, lose sight of these for a moment, and come to our *dependent* state upon the power and providence of God, and then all mankind will be reduced to a level. They are all dependent upon the mere mercy of the God of heaven ; by his bounty they live ; in him they have their being ; from the highest emperor to the meanest subject, all have their existence and subsistence from God. All are equally dependent upon him ; for all have an equal claim upon God's eternal mercy, as manifested in the gospel of Jesus. All are poor ; without God eternally poor and wretched.

But when we take up the subject in reference to the distinctions among men, we find, that at this time, the great and mighty paid little attention to the doctrines of

the Son of God, though the poor heard him gladly. Whole villages poured out their inhabitants. The poor are still the particular objects of God's mercy. He saw the majority of the world were poor, and it is right they should be so, therefore, he says, "The poor have the gospel preached to them." One would have supposed that the rich had a certain right to it. They have,—but they can *command* it. And the Prince Regent, if he had not better men, might send an order to Adam Clarke: "Come, Sir, and preach the glad tidings of salvation to me:" and I should obey. I should not argue upon abstract rights, and say, "No,—I am here constitutionally, and here I will remain;" but I should consider the authority of the prince, as binding me to go. The poor man would never attempt to use such authority. Herod sent for John, and John went to Herod; but a poor man would not think of doing so. God, therefore, sends the gospel to the poor. It is fashionable, and thank God for it!\* for our great men to have chaplains, whose express duty is to preach the gospel to these lords. We see the wise providence of God ordering here, that these persons shall be led to inquire for, and employ men, whose office it is, to preach to them the gospel of Jesus. In the order of God's providence, such persons come, and offer to you the glad tidings of salvation: and you are informed that God offers salvation to the poor. This is a wondrous economy of God. While I see the economy of God's providence in providing men, qualified with learning—solid learning—to preach to the great and

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\* The Rev. J. B. B. Clarke, the youngest son of the Doctor, is now chaplain to His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex; a circumstance little contemplated, when utterance was given to this exclamation.—EDITOR.

mighty of the land, I see no less the providence of God, in providing Methodist preachers for the evangelizing the mass of the people.

But there are some things a man may make occasion of offence, why he does not receive the gospel. It is strange there should be such. What! is there any reason why a man should be offended at the doctrines of the Son of God, who died for him? What! offended at his cross? What! stumble at him who is come to save his soul from hell-fire?—to purge his deeply-stained conscience from the guilt of many years' sin? If we find no other name under heaven by which we can be saved; if we find in the blood of the cross alone redemption for a fallen world, and that none can forgive sins but God; and if we find that God will forgive no sins, but for the sake of Jesus,—and that no man believes in Jesus, but he that feels his need of him,—and that no man feels his need, who is not convinced that it is an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the Lord God: then, we can find no ostensible reason why a man should stumble at the gospel.

But the man who lays hold of the gospel-hope, and leads a religious life, is persecuted. Away with your persecutions: you are not called to confess Jesus Christ in the flames; and if you were, I can believe the saying of a martyr, who went through a Smithfield-fire to heaven;—"I feel no more of the flame than if I was in a bed of down; yea, it is as a bed of roses." Can we believe that a man just going into eternity would tell a lie? I tell you, he could not. The truth is, God balances everything in favour of the man who believes in his name: and he that gives up soul and body to his Maker, God presses everything into his service. If deprived of what is called a more excellent means of getting his

bread, God balances all these affairs to the person who is tried by them ; and the result is ever for the advantage of the man : and God keeps up such a balance, that, I believe, if we knew the states of men we should not find any man who could say, he had less and fewer advantages for his salvation than another ; and that one man has not a suffering more than another. And, perhaps, we could not say, that any one man has any one particular religious privilege more than another man has, so far as our own country is concerned. There is no favouritism in the courts of heaven. Let us be satisfied, that all things work together for good to them that love God. Much, perhaps, of our persecution—of our depression—arises from our being unwilling to acknowledge God. You are afraid or ashamed of something, and do not acknowledge God properly. I remember being once in company, where the subject of religious persecution was introduced ; when a person present, to whom I was then a stranger, told us, that his mode of acting, when he fell among the enemies of religion, was this :—When anything was said against the Methodists and the people of God, he immediately gave the person who said it, to understand, that he was one of them, and then desired to know what he had to allege against them ; for as he had joined them from a persuasion, that they were the people of God, if they were not so he should be glad to be undeceived. He generally found this was sufficient to silence these men. In the presence of the decided Christian, the sinner is awed and confounded. What have you to be ashamed of, even before the king ? not anything, if it were possible, that an enemy to the cross of Christ could call you before him to answer for your gospel-hope !

The true Christian is a loyal subject. He who is de-

terminated to be a proper subject of his king, must not be a sinner ; for sinners are a curse to the land. To be a good subject, I must be a righteous man. Let me view the subject as I will, I can find nothing ostensibly, as a reason imposing on the understanding, why man should be stumbled at the Lord Jesus, or at the work of the Holy Spirit.

I am spending too much time ; I must draw to a conclusion by recommending to you the Son of God. I know you may all get saved this morning. Who has a blindness,—an intellectual blindness? Bring it to Jesus Christ. Are any of you deaf? Have you been long incapable of hearing the voice of God, in peace and comfort? Beg the Son of God, this morning, to unstop your ears ; and you shall hear strange things : you shall hear his pardoning voice. You shall hear, that God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish.” Are there any lame, who fain would walk in this way, but find no power to do it? Pray to that power who can do it. Petition the miracle-working Son of God, and he will strengthen you so as to enable you to walk in all the ordinances of God blameless ;—enable you to walk with an easy and constant peace, in the way of holiness. Are any spiritual lepers? with souls so defiled with the pollution of sin, that, if you were to die this morning, all the clemency of God could not take you to heaven? Apply to Jesus Christ, that he may cleanse you from the defilement of your sins. Are any of you dead? against whom the sentence of God is passed? dead in law, and in the eye of his justice,—only waiting the time the divine clemency has given you to repent and make your peace with him? Cry to the Son of God. He can raise the dead. He can redeem you from this

state. He can take away your guilt, restore you to the favour of God, and the light of life, which he has promised to them that believe in his name. Whatever is your malady, the Lord Jesus, whose kingdom is eternal, whose name is mercy, will save you from it. May he save both preacher and hearers, and bring us at last to his kingdom of glory! Amen.



## SERMON LV.

### THE GOD OF ALL GRACE.

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1 PET. v. 10, 11.

10. " But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11. " To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

I NEED not tell you, my friends, that a proper sense of the presence of God has a strong tendency to lead the mind so to profit by religious ordinances, as to reap everlasting advantages: because that causes everything to be referred immediately to God; that causes us to act as before him, and to consider the ends of all the means of grace, as channels to convey that grace by which the soul shall be saved. We should, then, devote the means to the ends of the institution, and we ought not to be satisfied unless our minds receive light and strength. It is strange there should be any necessity to enlarge on this important truth,—“Thou, God, seest me.” And yet there is scarcely anything within the compass of divine knowledge more liable to be forgotten. There is scarcely anything that affects us less, than a consciousness that God’s eye is upon us: and yet, if we have not this con-

sciousness, we shall not benefit by the most important subject ever brought before the eye of man.

Having lately heard the context read over,\* you have learned, that the church of God, to whom these words were sent, was in a state of suffering; and when we consult the epistle itself, we learn why they suffered. They appear to have received the gospel of Jesus Christ in Judea; and, in consequence of having professed faith in our Lord Jesus, they were persecuted by their countrymen, and were obliged to take refuge out of the precincts of their own land. Hence, the epistle is addressed to “strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” They were strangers in those countries,—though some apply this word to the Jewish proselytes. It appears, however, that the means used at that time to suppress the knowledge of God, became the most effectual means to propagate that knowledge. We do not find that the people who received the testimony of Jesus, suppressed their witness in favour of that testimony; but rather, we are told, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Nor did the persecutions they endured, cause them to suppress the knowledge of divine truth.

The epistle was calculated to give them encouragement in their trials and difficulties, and to assure them they were constantly under the eye of God; that after they had suffered, there was nothing that could happen to them, that would not turn out to their eternal advantage; and, that, in the meanwhile, the prayers which they offered to God, would be graciously received. And he concludes, by assuring them that “The God of all

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\* The text was taken from the Epistle for the day, the third Sunday after Trinity, which had been read in the “Morning Service,” at City Road, where the sermon was preached, June 11, 1816.

grace, who had called them to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after they had suffered awhile, would make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle them ;” and he finishes this part of the epistle (indeed, properly speaking, the whole of the epistle), by ascribing to him “glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

You, my friends, are not in the state of the church of God to whom this epistle was sent : but there is not a doctrine in it from which we may not derive much instruction. The portion which I have read over is well-calculated to make wise to salvation, and to encourage those who are sincere and devoted to God during their short pilgrimage upon earth.

From these words, let us consider *First*, the character which the apostle gives us of God, which is followed by general proofs of that character, sufficient to convince us, that what he has asserted is true ; “He has called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus ;” and *Secondly*, his assertion, that he who had called them to his eternal glory, would prepare them for that glory, by thus perfecting and settling them.

We see from this text, that the person who takes upon himself to explain it, is not obliged to prove the being of a God, because that is taken for granted ; but he is called upon to show what this God is, in reference to the salvation of man. He is, says the apostle, “the God of all grace.” The word *grace* we frequently meet with in the New Testament, and sometimes in the Old ; and though we find various acceptations of the word, the only easy, radical meaning is, that of favour, or good-will. This is the original meaning of the word, whether it is found in the Old or New Testament, both when applied to God and man. But when applied to God, we find it is always to be understood, not only as a principle that actuates the will or desire of the Divine Being, but ex-

cites him to act in behalf of those objects of grace or favour. Man may have his reasons for showing his favour or kindness, particularly to the members of his own household, or to the persons whom a variety of providential circumstances has placed immediately before his view, so as to excite what the bosom can feel of tenderness and compassion. Hence, we cannot say, *all* grace, benevolence, or kindness dwells in any creature. We do not know that it dwells in any of the heavenly hosts; I mean, we do not suppose, that the heavenly hosts can be affected with a disposition of favour or benevolence toward all in heaven or earth equally: for though we find kindness for the brute creation, we have not the favour or grace spoken of in the word of God, when men are the objects; so that we feel a difference of the working of that principle in reference to the brute creation, from what we do in reference to our fellows. And so, I conceive, it must be in the heavenly hosts: we must consider, that from their nature they are particularly affectionate towards those of the same nature with themselves. I have made these observations to introduce the following:—There is no motive filling the divine Mind to direct it to one class of creatures more than to another. There is one reason why it is so, as it could not feel all that we call by the name of eternal benevolence to all the objects of that benevolence. Hence God necessarily loves all the works of his own hands; and it was through eternal kindness he made all things. He made all substances, or matter, for the sake of intelligent spirits. As infinite and eternal, everything exists in him infinitely and eternally. There are no limits in the Divine Being; for whatever is an attribute of God, must be as extensive as the nature of which it is an attribute; otherwise, this would argue imperfection in the Divine Being. We argue, then, that if grace be an at-

tribute of God, it must necessarily be infinite and eternal : on this ground the apostle says. "He is the God of all grace,"—grace, or benevolence. Do we find such a thing as favour or benevolence among men ? We are led by this assertion to trace it up to God : for all the benevolence found in angels or men must be derived from him. Hence, we are led to acknowledge God in all his creatures, in which any of his attributes appear. When the apostle says, "The God of all grace," we must endeavour to understand the term as it may comport with his other attributes. What is this eternal benevolence ? How is this attribute known to exist in God ?

Every creature possessing good will is desirous of showing this by correspondent acts ; but there may be in the creature good will without the means and the power. If good will exist without the means and the power, no beneficent act takes place. There may be in the creature means to do good, without benevolence ; in that case no benevolent act takes place. There may be in the creature the means without the power ; in that case the creature performs no act of beneficence, because he wants the power. But when we look at the perfections of the Divine Being, we find his power is equal to his will, and his will is equal to his power. This distinguishes God from all the creatures he has made. He is not only infinite in benevolence, but in beneficence, because he possesses both the means and the power. I cannot say I can fully convey to your minds my own idea of this.

It is absurd to talk of God's performing without means. Whatever God does in heaven or earth, he does by means ; and he is constantly pressing those into his service which his creative energy is furnishing, and creating others by a vast number of causes and effects.

I assume, then, by what the apostle has said of God.

as infinitely kind and good, and infinitely powerful, that he can do whatever he pleases; and from the eternal benevolence of his nature, that he is ever disposed to do what he can. All these reasonings are crowned with complete evidence, when we take in that other word of the apostle, “Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.” The gift of Jesus Christ is the fullest proof God himself could give of his kindness, or of his being the fountain of eternal mercy.

“God is love.” We see, that from God’s eternal goodness proceeds the benevolence of his nature. The eternal benevolence of the Divine nature, proceeding from that eternal goodness, is, in act, in God himself. When it becomes manifest to man, it is in the way of grace. And if we consider man, as having no claims upon his Maker, and consider the state of man, and find he is a sinful creature, which is proved by the life and conduct of every human soul; when we consider man as a sinner, and in a state of hostility towards God, any act of beneficence to that creature must be an act of benevolence. It is from God’s eternal mercy to do kindness to those who have no claims. Our blessed Lord brings this subject before mankind most forcibly in these words: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” When you read in the word of God concerning Christ Jesus; when you find, that the Scripture clothes him with every attribute of the Divine Being, and that there is no equivocation used in reference to him by the inspired penmen, but they are to be understood precisely as they speak,—for it is very evident they believed them, as the passages appear to every capacity that can take in truths of this kind,—you then find, that the God of all grace has done all that his grace could induce him to do. When I

find, that to redeem man God gave up the greatest gift that he could give,—that he gave the Almighty's Fellow,—I find in Christ Jesus is manifested the plenitude of grace and goodness ; and beyond this nothing greater can be imagined by the soul of man. This gift is represented as the greatest that can possibly be conceived. There is a great deal of propriety in the apostle's connecting these two things,—the God of all grace sending Jesus Christ ; and not only sending him, but making him a sacrifice for the sins of the world ; for if we take not in this doctrine, it does not appear that the end the Almighty had in view could justify the expensiveness of the means used. Nothing less could do, than God has done, to obtain the end he had in view, the salvation of souls from endless perdition, and the filling the soul with his own nature ; making them capable of being joined with himself in eternal glory : and in no other way God would have accomplished this. The end at which God aimed, justifies the means God has used. The salvation of a world, in God's estimation, was worthy the incarnation and crucifixion of his Son. God can do nothing not absolutely necessary ; then it follows, that the incarnation of Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary, or other means would have been used.

“Has called you to his eternal glory.” By “glory” here we are to understand his own state of blessedness and happiness. What it consists in we cannot tell ; and perhaps it is best to say nothing on this subject ; only we may observe, that in it are contained all the gratifications which the soul of man is capable of receiving ; and the soul of man, being infinitely gratified, must necessarily be infinitely happy. In it there can be no evil ; nothing to interrupt that happiness, for it is not a temporary happiness ; it cannot be lessened, but it may increase, because there is an infinity in God, who is the

communicator of it, and because the soul of man has endless improvability in it. The state of God's eternal beatitude (and in that beatitude is the soul of man, if saved from sin), is not a state that may be lessened. If not lessened, it is a state that cannot be suspended, as it is eternal, and therefore incapable of these changes. Because it proceeds from the God of all grace, therefore it is eternal glory. Because he provided the gift of his Son, it is necessary that the end should be commensurate to the means used.

"Has called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." What do we understand by this?—"called you to his eternal glory." The original word signifies *to invite*. An invitation from God Almighty to come to his eternal glory; an invitation to every soul of man, to whose hearts the voice of God can reach, and to whose ears this revelation can come. I make this distinction, for I am satisfied that, where its words have never been heard, this invitation has been heard. When we read, that Jesus Christ is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; when we find his own Spirit, the Spirit of the God of heaven, is infinite and unbounded of itself; that it cannot be secluded from any place, but must be equally in every portion of the earth; that his Spirit has access everywhere, and is the means which God makes use of to convey the light that dwells in him who dwells in light unapproachable,—the light of God that dwells in Jesus Christ,—this shows us that God sends his Holy Spirit into the hearts and consciences of all men, to convince them of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and that his light is to be found, where his word has not yet been revealed. By this light, then, the heathens are taught the general principles of right and wrong. And on this ground God will judge the heathen, who have never been favoured with



divine revelation. Those who have acted conscientiously, according to the dictates of this heavenly light in their minds, shall not perish eternally, but have that measure of glory and happiness suited to their state; while those who have acted contrary to it shall be separated from God and happiness for ever.

God, then, invites all mankind to his eternal glory. This is perfectly consistent with his infinite benevolence and beneficence; for the act of inviting is an act of beneficence. When we consider the persons to whom the invitation is addressed, it is a proof of his infinite mercy. God has a reason for everything he does: there is nothing that God performs, but for which he has an infinite reason in his own eternal mind. He sometimes tells us his reasons, and sometimes not; but we have the clearest discoveries of his inducements to call mankind to his eternal glory. It is "by Christ Jesus." There is not a soul of man which the benevolence of God can call to his eternal glory, but in this way. It is a solemn thought. I wish any who have doubts on this point would take up this book,—take up the Old and New Testaments; and when they have done so, let them say if God can invite them to his eternal glory, or place them in it, but by Christ Jesus. Surely I may say without boasting, few people in the world have read this book more carefully than myself: if there was any way of coming to God, independently of Jesus Christ, I should have found it out. I have sifted it every way, and have had opportunities more than many others; and have made the best use of the quantum of intellect God has given me. I have been led to the confirmed opinion, that it is perfectly inconsistent with the perfections of God to give salvation to the human race by any means or method but by Jesus Christ; and by Jesus Christ, not as an instructor of the human race, or as a

bright example, but as an *atoning sacrifice*, required and prepared by God himself; and that God, by this, gives us to understand that he can be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; that he can invite all mankind to his eternal glory, and has furnished the means to prepare them for it.

“Has called us to his eternal glory.” To be convinced of this is matter of great importance. Who doubts this? Read everywhere: is not every man called? Have we not the most positive assurances that God willeth not the death of a sinner? If he could, he could not be the God of all grace. There could not then be an infinite unabated emotion of benevolence in that mind. But when we find the apostle asserting that he is the God of all grace, and the prophet asserting, God willeth not the death of a sinner, it then follows that they are in perfect harmony. Can we say, that the invitations given to the human race indiscriminately are insincere? or are not intended to apply to every man whose ears hear these invitations? Need I argue on this point? If God has given general invitations to man, as all generals include parts, of which parts the generals are composed, it was impossible for God to give a general invitation to the human race, and not have had in view every individual of the human race. If they are general invitations, then they are generally applicable; and if generally applicable, then they are individually applicable. It follows from this word, that we are personally invited by the living God, to go to his eternal glory, and this by the Son of his love; and it is consistently with this, that the Word says of your repentance, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and (then) let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

But that these general invitations may become effectual, hear what God promises to do : “ Make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” The apostle here brings in a particular word, “ After having suffered awhile,”—suffered awhile ; he calls it *awhile*—a short time. During the time of suffering, the time of probation,—of various trials and difficulties, God is to prepare them for his eternal glory. And he intimates here, that these tribulations, by which the body or mind of man may be affected, can have no influence to counteract the designs of God, in regard to the salvation of the soul. We find that God takes away our hinderances at once ; that he removes all doubts and fears respecting the evils that are in the world ; and shows that all these are pressed into the service of the man whose heart is right with God. In order that we should see his design is, that this glory should be inherited by all, he tells us that he will perfect, stablish, strengthen us.

The first term employed here has been the cause of a vast deal of dispute. Scarcely anything affrights man so much as the doctrine of perfection, because we understand by this that we may live in this world, so as not to sin against God. If I would look for another sense, I must look for another word in the original.

When I consider that the object of God is to bring sinners to his eternal glory, and place them where no evil can be ; where nothing that corrupts, nothing that is defiled, can enter ; when I consider that God gave up his Son to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil,—and to counterwork him ; then, I see, that it must be the design of God to take away evil, in order that we may be fitted for eternal good. And as it is impossible for the soul of man to enjoy God if not holy and pure, it necessarily follows that God designs to make it holy ; and if it is the design of God to make it

holy, it must be in this world this preparation is to take place ; for it is not *in* glory that we must be prepared *for* glory. It is here that all our sins must be forgiven ; if so, will it not follow that all impurities must be purged away here ? for nothing of this can be done in the eternal world. It is glory in the eternal world, grace in this world. The grace of God manifested in most gracious and merciful acts ; this we must expect below : and then the result, God has told us, will be what is called a state of glory. We must be saved from sin in this life. “No,” says one, “If man is so saved, it must be when he comes to die.” Let us refer to the Bible. Where can you show me this in the Bible ? We can say, there is nothing of this in the eternal world ; there is no such thing in the book of God. We are led to conclude from the most positive declarations, that we must be saved from our sins, that we must be made one with Christ Jesus, that we must have that mind in us which was in Christ,—that we must be created anew in Christ Jesus,—that God intends here our being made perfect ; and that here we are to have all those graces and fruits which constitute the mind that was in Christ.

To be more particular, the word perfect signifies to put things dislocated into their places. Look at the soul of man ; is it not in disorder,—the immediate effects of sin ? Was not the soul of man originally built up to be a habitation of God through the Spirit ? Has not sin disordered this habitation ? What is this word of grace but to restore and raise up the stones out of the rubbish, to bring everything into its own place, and build us up once more to be a habitation of God through the Spirit ? May God, this morning, put them all in their places,—put every faculty and appetite in its place ; and when thus made perfect, may he stablish you ; make you firm

in this state of perfection ! May his Almighty power shore and buttress you up, so that you shall not fall to the right or to the left, but be upright before him, and stand regularly and perpendicularly built on the foundation, JESUS CHRIST. He is the foundation on which we must be built. You are to be made like him, and bear the image of the heavenly Adam as you have borne the image of the earthly Adam. He is the foundation to support the building, but we must be regularly built on that foundation, that the whole building may settle on him. If there are any builders here, they know that a building, when it comes to settle, sometimes cracks, not being built perpendicularly, or because the foundation was not well laid,\* the rubbish not properly cleared away. May the whole building settle on him ! Here, says the apostle, the foundation is Christ, and we must be built upon that ; and by whom ? By the Almighty Architect himself ; he that built the world. As the foundation cannot give way, and as God is the builder, the building will regularly settle on him. He then adds, “strengthened.” May he strengthen you ! You will be opposed ; the temptations and trials of life will assail you ; and the building will be thrown down if God do not continue to support it. But God is represented as supporting the building. “The rains descended, and

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\* It is not to be supposed here that Christ, as the foundation, could by any possibility not be “well laid.” That foundation was *well laid* in Zion. But the preacher here properly refers to the secondary foundation. In all buildings there is a primary and secondary foundation,—that upon which the foundation of the building itself stands. The apostles and prophets constituted a secondary foundation. Believers also found all in Christ. And it is of importance to be well settled on the right foundation ; the point insisted on by the preacher.—EDITOR.

the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, because it was founded on a rock." So here, the apostle gives us to understand, speaking after the manner and in the spirit of his Master, that God will support the building which is built on this eternal foundation. He will strengthen and settle you. This last term may refer also to every temptation that may come to unsettle you, against every temptation that may come to unsettle you with respect to providence, or God's care in supplying your future wants.

"To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Let it be acknowledged that the glory comes from him, and the power by which it is acquired. Acknowledge him as your Creator,—yourselves as subject to him, and dependent upon him. While you rejoice that he has given you a law, remember that he requires subjection to his dominion.

All which the apostle here says takes in God's eternal goodness, in sending Jesus Christ to redeem the world,—Christ's eternal grace in dying,—Christ's eternal kindness, and God's eternal goodness in providing all the means by which the souls of men may be prepared for that eternal glory in the way he has appointed them to walk in, that they miss it not.

"To him," the God of all grace, "be glory;" all honour and praise be ascribed; and "dominion," the government of heaven, earth, and hell; "for ever," through time; "and ever," through eternity. "Amen." So be it, so let it be, and so it shall be.

## SERMON LVI.

### PROBATION AND TEMPTATION.

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1 COR. X. 12, 13.

12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

13. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man ; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

THE doctrine of these two verses, and the whole of the epistle, is to prove that man is in a state of probation ; and that in that state we may stand or fall ; or, to speak, perhaps, more strictly, in reference to the great doctrine of the corruption of human nature. In that state of probation we may rise and stand, and having stood may fall ; therefore the caution, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

If the present state were not what I have already referred to, there could be no caution of this kind given by the Spirit of Truth. If we are warned against any evil, it is a proof the evil may take place, or be avoided ; we are not to suppose any warning is given without reason ; we are not to suppose the warning given of any approaching evil can be useless, unless we make it so ; hence, the conclusion already drawn, the evils of which we are warned may take place, or be avoided.

I suppose there is no need to stop here to prove there is evil in the world, and that man is exposed to it ; and that there is spiritual evil in the world, and man may be ruined by it. Our own experience convinces us there is a vast deal of natural evil in the world ; and what is strictly called by that name is unavoidable. Such are the sufferings of the present state, entailed upon us by the sin of our first parent. What are brought on further, are the offspring of crimes, and cannot be included in the list of those unavoidable sufferings, such as must take place from the present constitution of the human body in nature.

The whole of this probation, and everything connected with it, is in reference to another state ; for a state of trial implies some place to which it has a reference. Time stands in reference to another state ; in reference to eternity. Time itself is a system of revolutions and changes ; everything in time is changeable. In eternity there are none of these changes ; all is fixed,—all infinite duration, without any kind of measurement. It is ETERNITY ! This state of eternity, or eternal state, is considered in a two-fold point of view,—endless blessedness, or endless misery. It is in reference to these, warnings are given relative to standing or falling. As there is a state of eternal blessedness, the soul must be prepared for it. As there is a state of ruin, the soul must be prepared for that. To escape the ruin, is to be prepared for the enjoyment of the eternal God. Not to be prepared for the enjoyment is to be necessarily exposed to the eternal ruin. This is a maxim in religion, and it is founded in common sense ; and it is one which, I suppose, no reasonable mind will oppose. The Holy Scriptures continually hold out to the view of man this eternal world. The promises so plenteously scattered through the Sacred Volume, stand in reference to eternal



blessedness ; the threatenings, in reference to the eternal misery. The evil is exposed, in order that it may be avoided. The good is exhibited, in order that it may be desired. If we find God speaking of hell and perdition, it is to warn us, that we go not to that place of torment. If we find him speaking of heaven and glory, and setting these things before our eyes, it is that we may desire them, and use the means to prepare us to enjoy them. God does not show us a perdition that cannot be avoided, nor a heaven we cannot attain. It is a simple maxim, but one which would have great influence on the conduct of men if they seriously considered it, that God shows us no evil that may not be avoided, and no good we may not attain.

There is a doctrine I shall say a few words upon, viz., The fallen state of man. We call it a fallen state, by which we mean, a state of degradation. Man is not what he originally was. He could not be in such a state as we see him in now when he came from the hand of his Creator, from whose hand nothing imperfect can come.

The state of life is a state of probation or trial, and we are furnished with all the means of rising from this fall, and of standing when we have risen up ; of going on in that way that leads to glory, and of finally reaching that glory. On these subjects you will not expect me to dwell long. We learn, and we should magnify God with all our souls for this teaching, that God so loved the world, though fallen from his image, that he gave his only-begotten Son to die for the offences of mankind ; and the whole of the New Testament treats of Jesus Christ as coming into the world for the purpose of making an atonement for the sins of mankind ; and all the pardon and salvation spoken of in the book of God, as promised by God himself to man, is represented

as coming through the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus. It is astonishing to me, to find, that learned and sensible men have been able to look at this book, and to receive it as a revelation from God, and yet have not been convinced of this great doctrine.

From the whole we learn, that through Jesus Christ we may be raised from this fall ; and if so, may be brought into that state, that moral state, in which the soul was in the beginning. I cannot conceive how a soul raised from the fall can imply anything else. If raised from that degradation, it must be fully raised. A being raised from a part of the evil which he sustained in the fall, can answer no purpose of heaven. As to a man being raised partially here, and perfectly in the other world, as this has no foundation in the Scripture, it can have none in any creed of mine.

If, then, the being raised from this fall in order to stand implies the regaining the image of God, in which we were created ; and if this image is regained through Jesus Christ, and, in effect, is the having Christ in us the hope of glory,—living in our minds,—working in our souls,—transforming us into his own likeness, and sustaining everything by his own power and grace ; if this, I say, be done at all, it is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the grace of the Spirit of Christ ; the sacrifice having made the way plain to it, and then the Eternal Spirit of the Lord Jesus uses the great agent to take away sin from the soul, and trace on it all the image of God in which we were created.

Those who have received the Spirit of God are the persons who stand. It is by the same energy, and the same influence, by which man stood when created ; for man stood in the beginning by the grace or favour of God, in which we stand. All this must be of grace, and not of debt, for debt implies legal claims ; there can

be nothing of this kind in man ; not even as man was in the beginning, because he was not an independent being. Whatever good God has dispensed to any intelligent being, that good is the spring of his own grace and kindness. Man stood in the beginning by grace, because he could have no merit. It is, then, by the grace of God,—his free unmerited mercy, manifested through Jesus Christ, that the fallen soul is raised to a state of holiness and purity. Through that grace continuing to work in it and by it, it is that the soul continues to stand. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” From this we learn, that the man who was standing, might fall ; and he was to take heed lest he should fall.

I shall not be long in discussing a subject on which many volumes have been written ; viz., The impossibility of falling from a state of grace. To me the thing is plain, from our own accountableness, and from our state of trial. A man, in any state in the whole compass of his being, is in a state of trial, and he may change in that state ; and it holds good in reference to a change from good to evil, as from evil to good. The arguments that will go to prove one, will prove the other. We shall find the doctrine firmly established. The man is low,—he is degraded,—he may change and be raised to holiness and happiness ; and he who is happy may fall from that state. It has been intimated that the apostle, in this passage, does not declare this. “Let him that thinketh he standeth,” does not, say some, necessarily imply that he does stand ; those capable of judging of the apostle’s words well know, that the word used here is used to assert the certainty of the thing. It might be translated, “Let him that most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall.” Nothing less than that is implied in the apostle’s expression.

We learn from this, that the apostle saw that those persons who had made the deepest advances in holiness might fall from their stedfastness ; and to prevent it he said, " Take heed lest ye fall." I do contend, there could not be any reason for the caution if that were impossible ; and, my brethren, it is a most dangerous thing to get a different conviction upon this subject, as it must necessarily lead to carelessness. Let men know, to their comfort, that whatever evil is in them, it may be taken away. If low and vile, they may be quickened and saved from that state ; and when raised, let them know, that unless they watch unto prayer, and keep close to God, they must necessarily lose what they have received.

In order to comfort them, and to inspire them with confidence in this business, he adds, " There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." It might have been said, in answer, to " take heed, lest ye fall ;" that is, you that stand. It is impossible to resist our foes, for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, &c. Who are able to resist and overcome these ? To cut off all doubts on this subject, he says, " There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man ;" or, as we find it frequently translated, " such as is proportioned to the human state and strength." This is the meaning of the apostle—such as is proportioned to the human state, to the strength of the human being. God, having the government of the world, the government of all things that act in the world, principalities and powers are as much under his government as angels and arch-angels. They are as much under God's government as any part of God's creation are under the influence and control of the almighty power, which regulates and governs all things, according to the counsel of his own will. God will not permit any distress or difficulty to come to any

man that he is not able to resist. It is impossible for any of our enemies to slip in, and with a power vastly superior to our own, to overcome us. The infinite wisdom of God, which is everywhere present, the infinite eye of God, that sees all things, can see all this ; and we are not to suppose that these spirits are not under continual control. They all have their limits. They have their line marked out by the living God, over which they cannot pass. Hence, it is impossible, these spiritual beings could possess any energy that is beyond the limits of the creature, made in his own image, and placed in a state of probation. This will tend to rectify an error into which some have fallen, viz., that we may be tempted above that we are able to overcome. This is impossible ; the doctrine of the text is against it ; the government of God is also against it. We can never be in such circumstances. Here an error is rectified, and we have encouragement. Whatever evil comes against me is an opposeable evil—an evil that may be overcome. God does not say we have a power of our own to overcome evil. It is the power of God, by which we overcome. We have nothing that we have not received ; we can do nothing but as strengthened from on high ; but the power which God communicates, must be used by us.

It may be necessary here to consider the import of the term *trial* or *temptation*. The apostle uses the words indiscriminately, by which we are led to consider them of the same import. Temptation is trial. What does it imply ? The metaphor is taken from looking into substances that are deceitful at the heart. Although they have a fair outside, we generally bore them through, in order to see if the heart is sound. If the outside is fair, we have a suspicion of the whole. This is the original of the term temptation or trial.

Again : It signifies an essay, in order to effect some

particular purpose. A man tries to do a thing, in order to find out if he is capable of doing it. Refer this to the subject before us: "There has no trial happened unto you but such as is common to man." You are not exercised in any way opposed to the great general design of God, to proportion a man's strength to his day of trial. Our enemies are not insured of success, because the temptation is a trial to see if they are able to succeed. Satan himself, when he comes against any of you, is not sure he shall succeed; because it is a state of trial, and because you have means whereby you can successfully resist; therefore, all is doubt with him. He has no certainty he shall overcome any man whom he tempts; he only tries to see whether he will be unfaithful; he only tries to see whether we will serve him in preference to the Lord Jesus Christ—whether we will have hell fire in preference to eternal glory. Only consider the object of the tempter, and the course of the temptation, and you will find little difficulty to overcome it. Remember all the way through you are tried to see if you will be unfaithful; that you are tried to see whether you will take the path of the world that leads to perdition, or the way of God which leads to glory. The consideration of these things is sufficient to arm you against the trial. Some have analyzed temptation, and it is very well done in a little book called "The Christian's Pattern," by Thomas à Kempis. Few men knew the deceits of the human heart better than he did. Few men have spoken so deeply about the experience of the Christian in communion with God, as that man. In temptation he says there are the following things. First, The simple desire; Secondly, The strong imagination—the impression made upon the imagination by the thing to which we are tempted; Thirdly, Delight in viewing it, with the opinion that if possessed, it would be useful;

Fourthly, The consent of the will to perform it. Certainly these very things show the opposeableness of temptation itself. It cannot come all at once ; it must come in the ordinary way in which anything comes to the human mind. A view is given of a particular thing ; a view, let me say, of the most abominable wickedness in the world. This is neither good nor bad ; it is the simple presentation of the subject ; the idea generated in the mind by the subject being brought before the understanding. Now in this way Satan is obliged to come with all his temptations ; he must first introduce the simple idea ; there can be no knowledge of the thing, it can have no conception or being, unless it thus comes. Then there is a strong imagination. A person continues to look at the thing ; and the tempter will care to bring it forward with all its heightenings, with all its specious appearances. If it be prohibited (and to the man who fears God it *is* prohibited), that consideration is enough to make him stop at once—then the snare is broken ; but if he do not stop, but indulge the view of it, as it is presented to him, a strong imagination of the thing is placed upon the soul, and then will his passions begin to work. The thing no longer impresses him with a simple idea ; it has not an existence merely in the intellect, as it had when first presented as a simple idea ; but as a strong imagination it is stamped upon the soul. The man next begins to delight in it. It is something profitable, or something to gratify his passions or appetites. When this 'desire takes place, the mind is engrossed with it. Then lastly, there is consent of the will. The lust is conceived—sin is finished—and death brought forth. The simple idea led to the strong imagination ; the imagination to the delight ; the delight to the consent ; and then we may add, if time and opportunity occur, the evil intended will be done. If the

man still continues under its influence, he will begin to seek for time and opportunity.

We see the progress of temptation in the case of Achan. I saw, says he, a rich Babylonish garment and a wedge of gold. There was no sin in simply seeing it; an angel of God might have seen it without the least stain of sin; but said he, when I saw it, I coveted it. Here he felt the temptation; it began to get possession of his heart. And then, he adds, when I coveted it, I took it. Here he entered fully into it; but afraid of exposure, and that he might not be detected, he says, I hid it among the stuff, determined to keep what he had got—hid it so that it could not be found out but by God himself. Here you see the progress of temptation. He might have resisted in every stage.

All this shows us that we stand on better ground than we have sometimes imagined; and that God has not permitted any of these things to be so mixed, as that it is impossible to separate them one from another. They are not links of a chain in connexion till we make them so; but they are all separate links in the first instance, and can only become a chain, as we link them by consent and determination.

I need not specify the different kinds of temptation in the world. Under the general class of temptations a man may be tried with, we might notice, a privation of the comforts and necessities of life, or with an abundance. Temptations and trials come from both opposites, and as energetically from one as from the other. The human mind is as powerfully tried by abundance, as by want. I would dwell a moment on this.

Privation of good may be a strong trial, if you have not the necessities of life, or its comforts and conveniences. All these may be causes of trial, and may cause murmurings and repinings; we may make them so. If, in



affliction, you may murmur against God, because he has afflicted you, when perhaps if the affliction were unloosed, it might be traced to some cause of your own life. The greater part of the natural evils in the world spring from the voluntary evils of mankind ; and the greater part of natural evils would be avoided if men lived to the glory of God. Who expects that an abundance of temporal good, an increase of friends, are likely to be subjects of temptation ? We take no warning if our temporal good increases, but all are alarmed if poverty come. We are equally alarmed if we find any deficiency in our trade. But is it cause of alarm to any man under heaven this day, if he find his temporal mercies to increase ? I have read of some such cases. I have read of a man who, when he had received several mercies from the hand of God, afraid of having his portion in this life ; he said, “ Lord, hold thy hand, for I will not have my portion in this life.” As a man naturally loves to have everything at will, and an abundance by which he may gratify himself, as to his desire, wish, and endeavour, the increase of temporal things never produces any kind of alarm in him. Sometimes he feels he might give more to the poor, and do more good with what he has, but he will soon find a reason to excuse himself from even this—a family growing up, and old age are coming on, “ I must,” says he, “ take care to lay by for my children, and must be careful to provide for old age.”

I have another observation to make ; it is, when the temptation or trial takes place, God, whose eye is upon man, who knows his circumstances, and everything connected with him, has always contrived something to counterbalance that temptation. “ He will with the temptation also make a way for our escape,” that we be not overcome. As the devil comes in, God makes a way for you to get out. If the trial comes, and if more trials

are added, and the possibility of escape seems necessarily excluded, depend upon it God will, with the temptation, make the deliverance or way out. Satan is never permitted to block up our way, without the providence of God making a way through the wall. Should a holy soul get into difficulties and straits, he may depend upon it, there is a way out, as there was a way in; and the trial shall in no instance be above the strength God gives.

All this I speak in reference, as I told you in the beginning, to the eternal world. Whatever grace you receive from God here, your enemy will endeavour to strip you of; but take courage, and look to God. It is glory that crowns grace. Grace is that which saves the soul. Look, then, to get the soul saved. Whether you allow you have fallen in Adam or not, surely you will allow you have fallen into sin. If then you have fallen into a state of sin, and are condemned because you have sinned, then nothing less than the eternal mercy of God can save you from the consequences of your own sin. It is an object of no consequence how you came into that state of sinfulness; if you are found in it you are in danger of perishing everlastingly.

We are all sinners. What are you doing, in order to get out of that state? Are you despairing, because you are brought into captivity? Remember, you are in a state of probation; you may rise, though you are fallen. You may rise into the full image of God—into the full love of God, in order to be a partaker of a full state of glory. It is astonishing to me, a thing should become an article of faith, as if it were in every page of the Bible, that we must be saved from our sins *in death*. Do not believe that, but believe you are to be saved *in life*—believe that you are to be saved *now*. Here you have no continuing city, no time to call your own—you

are a tenant-at-will. O consider that, while the hand of mercy is towards us for good, the sword of justice trembles, as it were, by a hair over our heads. We should pray to live each day as if it were our last. We should pray to live each moment in reference to eternity. Every misimproved moment of time will have its influence in reference to eternity. If every degree of grace have a proportionate degree of glory, and if it is in the purpose of God and in the nature of the thing that it should be so, then how careful should we be to improve our time ! A moment lost is irrecoverably lost ; and the grace is lost that was to crown that moment.

## SERMON LVII.

### PROMISES TO THE MAN WHO HAS SET HIS LOVE UPON GOD.

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PSALM xci. 14—16.

14. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15. "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him ; I will be with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16. "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

I once observed, in preaching out of the book of Psalms, in this place,\* that there is a key, which might be applied to a number of them, to explain what appears, at first view, contradictory senses and meanings. We find often in the same Psalm, different states of mind described. In one part we have a description of the deepest agony, and conviction of sin, and a calling on God for mercy : in another part, we have exultation in the salvation of the Most High ; and perhaps, in another, deploring the absence of God's Spirit from the soul. That these different states could not be the state of one man, at the same time, common sense must allow. How

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\* City Road, London, June 18, 1815.—EDITOR.

then did these different sentiments get together in the same Psalm, which we suppose was composed at one time? The way to solve this difficulty is this: It appears from the whole book, that David kept an exact register, called a diary, of the dealings of God with his soul. Nothing is more clear than this: and that out of this diary he afterwards composed those prayers and praises, which we call Psalms. In consequence of thus composing a particular psalm out of several parts of his diary, relating to several days, in which he passed through different states of mind, we find different states described. We must have respect to this; and consider this part as relating, at one time, to that experience; another part to that; and a third part to that: and this rule we must apply to everything of this kind, through the whole of this book.

Another thing to be observed in reading over this book, which has been long held in the highest esteem in the church of God, is this: several psalms are real dialogues—some, between God and the psalmist; and others, between different persons, whom he himself introduces. And if we pay strict attention to the nature of the parts which each bears in the psalm, we shall be at no loss to discover who the different persons were.

In the oldest Jewish commentary, or rather paraphrase on this psalm, into another language, it is stated to be a dialogue between David and his son Solomon. Looking into it, we find this to be exceedingly probable; but we also find a third person, who speaks in reference to what is spoken by the other two, and the third person is God himself.

David begins at the first verse, with his own observation, and he is answered by Solomon, in the next two verses. The answer of Solomon suggests to the mind of his father the goodness of God, which is treasured up

for them that fear him ; and from the beginning of the third to the thirteenth verse, he tells him what great blessings God would confer upon him, if he found him to abide faithful in his testimony : from the end of the thirteenth to the end of the sixteenth verse, is the speech of the Almighty, in reference to the uprightness of David's house.

We cannot look into this psalm with this idea, without seeing its correctness.

David begins by asserting, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Here is a solemn assertion, founded on the universal experience of the church of God, and dictated by God's own Spirit. He who has an acquaintance with his Maker abides constantly with him, and is protected by his almighty power.

Solomon answers : "I will say of Jehovah, he is my refuge and my fortress : my God, in him will I trust." That is, satisfied with what thou hast said concerning him, and the safety of those that trust in him, I have made up my mind on this momentous subject ; I also will say of Jehovah, he is my refuge and my fortress : I will make him such : my God, and I will trust in him. Glad to hear such an acknowledgment, his pious father subjoins the blessings such a person may expect to receive from God.

"He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence : He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." He shall act towards thee, as a hen does to her brood : take thee under his wings when danger is near. He will take care of thee ; he will foster thee ; he will protect thee. All the promises are made to thee, and to the persons who profess and do actually put their trust in him ; and these promises shall be fulfilled ; and "his

truth"—his revelation, "shall be thy shield and buckler." It contains promises for all times and circumstances. Armed with that, thou shalt stand against, and resist all thy foes.

He points out the comfort such an upright soul shall have. "He shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day." Whatever calamities befall those whose trust is not in God, God will distinguish the man that trusts in him, and preserve him in these calamities. While thousands fall on the right hand and on the left—for the wicked live not out half their days, the life of such a person shall be preserved. "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked." However long God striveth with transgressors, yet his justice slumbereth not. We see as many manifestations of God's judgments in this life, as to prove that he puts a difference between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

"Because thou hast made the Lord thy refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee:" no evil shall come nigh thy dwelling : "thou shalt be safe in thy soul, body, household, and property.

This comes naturally from David, supposing him to be the person that speaks, who had had such long experience of God's mercy. Seeing thou hast made the Lord who has been thy God, and who hast been thy father's God,—who has supported thee all thy life long, and crowned thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy ;—seeing thou hast thus made him thy trust—the Most High God thy trust, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. How can it be, if the Most High God be the protector of thy soul ? Resist the Satan, and he shall flee from thee : to any place can Satan come, but into the soul where God resides. Many of those things which we call temptations

do not come into the list of those that come from Satan, but from a want of a proper concern for our eternal welfare. For,

“He shall give his angels charge over thee.” He will take care to protect thee by every means; even his own host shall be thy ministers, to minister to thy salvation; God shall give his angels charge concerning thee. We learn from this, that these heavenly spirits are all ministering spirits to those who are in the way to the kingdom of heaven—who are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder.” Thy spiritual foes, great and powerful as they may be; cunning and deceiving, and waylaying as they may be, shall not prevail against thee. No man doubts the truth of all this, in reference to a person who could say, “I will say of Jehovah he is my refuge, and fortress; my God, in him will I trust.” If the thing is so, and these assertions are all true; and God did for the person as he who speaks says, no wonder, in that age of revelation, that God comes immediately in, and confirms the word of his servant: “Because he has set his love,” his heart, his soul—“upon me” (speaking of Solomon), “therefore I will deliver him.” I will save him in all troubles, temptations, and evils of every kind. “He shall call upon me; and I will answer him,” but I will not answer, unless he call. He must continue to pray, and then I will give him whatever is best for him. “I will be with him in trouble;” literally, as soon as trouble comes, I am there. “I will deliver him.” He may be exercised, but delivered he shall be. “I will honour him,”—I will glorify him: he shall have the honour that comes from God: men shall see how highly I prize him. “With long life will I satisfy him.” He shall have



length of days,—shall neither live a useless life, nor die before his time. He shall live and die in peace. “And shew him my salvation.” He shall feel boundless desires, and shall see that I have provided boundless gratification for him. He shall dwell in my glory, and throughout eternity increase in his resemblance to and enjoyment of me. Thus shall it be done to him whom God delights to honour. God delights to honour the man who places his love on him. He shall have long life in this world, and an eternity of blessedness in the life to come.

As none of these things were spoken of Solomon in his person, or character, or office, as king of Israel, and as heir to the throne of David, but merely as a good man, therefore they are true of every person who bears this character. Brethren, we may say here, our fathers have declared it to us, and it has been the declaration also of the church of God, from the foundation of the world to the present time, that “he who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” In this consists true religion. Can a man who is acquainted with God and himself, say that he perceives his need of God, and feeling that need, applies to God, who supplies his wants—Can he say that he has taken the Almighty for his portion? Then he dwells in the secret place of the Most High: then he has communion with his God; and this is a secret to all the world, and a secret to the church of God, as far as it concerns this particular individual; for it is not the communion of the church collectively, but of the church individually. Each person holds this communion for himself. It is a communion every member holds with God, and it has reference to that member’s own individuality; for the piety of another has no effect upon one

who has not the same influence. Every member must have piety for himself; he must have faith for himself; pardon and holiness for himself.

My brethren, in order to get a religion of this kind, we must be such as God requires us to be. We should form our estimate of good and evil; refuse the evil and choose the good; choose God for our portion. We may depend on this, that no man becomes religious by accident. Every man, saved from sin, must be consciously saved: he knows he is saved; he knows he is saved from sin by and of God, because he most earnestly implored that salvation, and could not be satisfied without it: he was conscious, therefore, when God revealed himself to him by his Spirit. He who earnestly implores the salvation of God is a man who is determined not to rest without it; for the careless do not pray: they sometimes say words, but they do not pray. Words of prayer in their mouths, form no prayer in the sight of the Almighty: not even the prayer of Jesus Christ; that prayer which God has given us, and which never a sincere soul offered to God without an answer; that very prayer, in the mouth of such a person, is not acknowledged as prayer, in reference to that person.

As everything about us, which we see and have heard of, and everything we read in God's book, shows us the necessity of being saved, we ought to form the determination to be saved, and take up the resolution of the person in the second verse, which is essentially necessary; "I will say of Jehovah, he is my refuge; my fortress, in him will I trust." Will he seek for salvation in any other protection? No, in no other. God alone can save, and God alone can protect. God alone can save from sin, and protect me in that state of salvation into which his mercy brings me; then "in him will I trust."

I suppose all feel the reasonableness of this, and in a

spirit of this kind expect the protection of the Almighty. Every good that has been promised to the person here spoken of may be enjoyed by you ; because, as I before observed, they have a reference to character.

But I wish to introduce the words chosen for the text, as I am desirous of showing you how you may set your love upon God. I had an opportunity last Sunday, of showing you how God has set his love upon you ; what God has done in reference to you : I wish to show you to-day what you should do in reference to God.

“ Because he has set his love upon me therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high because he has known my name.”

As to heads or portions, divisions and subdivisions, I have none but what God has pleased to give. God speaks of the person who makes the profession, which you have in the second verse. God takes you up, on your profession of Christianity ; on your profession of faith in Christ Jesus, and your dependence on his passion and death for salvation. As obedience to God always marks our love to God, and there is no obedience without love ; hence it is necessary to be well satisfied of God's love communicated to us, as well as what he has done for us. Many persons rest in the latter, and pay little attention to the former. You hear much spoken of what God, in his eternal love, has done for mankind ; but how little do you hear in general, of what God's love does in mankind ! The truth is, this attainment of inward holiness, is attended with so much self-denial, mortification, and taking up of the cross ; and besides, holiness is so little experienced by the church of God, that this part of the subject is left out of the pulpit ; just as it is out of the creeds of the majority of professing people. You know, in the world, and more especially in the religion of this nation, which is professedly the Christian religion, this

second point is but seldom urged. People talk much, and indeed well, on what Christ has done for us ; and yet all that has been done for us, is in reference to what he is to do in us. He was incarnated, he suffered, he died, he rose again from the dead, and ascended to heaven, and appears there in the presence of God for us. These acts he undertook, in order to reconcile us to God ; that he might blot out our sin, and purge our consciences from dead works ; that he might bind the strong man armed, wash the polluted heart ; and, in a word, destroy the works of the devil.

God never did anything of this kind for mankind, but in reference to his working in mankind. Christ came to repair the breach that had been made. He came to restore us to the image of God. Why did God manifest himself in the flesh ? To blot out our iniquities ; to take away sin, and not merely to take away wrath ; and that benevolence which intimates God's purity and holiness, cannot rest with complacency in any spirit, where the spirit of Satan dwells. Through the whole of the New Testament, it is frequently insisted on, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost ; that God dwells in us by his Spirit ; and that he who has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, is still under condemnation : and we are told, this love is a powerful principle inspired by God. Brethren, it is possible to have a measure of this love, and indeed, who has not a measure ? Where is the man in whose heart God is not working, less or more ? Wherever these workings are, they are proofs of God's love : and how is it communicated ? In the way of love and power. The man who has got a measure of this, should place it immediately on God from whom it came. As everything was made by God, so everything should be made for God. Whatever he communicates to the soul should

go back to himself; whatever we receive from him should be carefully given up to him again. On this ground it is, our substance belongs to the Almighty, and that we have no right to dispose of it, but according to the direction of his eternal word. And, blessed be God, we are not without directions, "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do all to the glory of God." All our love to God; all our fear of sin, all our desire after sacred things; all our meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, should be in reference to God's glory.

In reference to this person, God says, "Because he has set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him." This person sets his love upon God. It has been often observed, that the love of God in the soul of man, is often so mixed with earthly love, that if we do not take care, we shall follow the one, merely natural, instead of the other, purely spiritual. I know this is a very proper observation. It is possible, while our hearts are full of love to God and sacred things, to lose sight of it, when called to different connexions. What should we do, in order to prevent everything of this kind? Determinately set our love upon God. Who is He? The God who made, and who has fed me all my life long; from whose hand I have received all my blessings; sometimes by the instruments which he himself has chosen, sometimes without them; however, he is always helping me. Who is He? The God of all grace who gave Jesus Christ for me: that did not merely contemplate me in the mass of creation; for if there had not been another soul that sinned against God, still, for myself to be saved, Jesus must have suffered and died. No human soul is saved, without the whole of Christ's sufferings, any more than that the world is saved without the whole. He gave his Son for me; and we may remark, how very pointed and restricted the inspired penmen speak on this

subject. "He made me, and gave himself for me," as well as he made the world, and has given himself for the world. Then does not God, and reason, and nature, and everything cry out, I should set my love upon him? The love of God implies the same as love to God. Love to God from man implies benevolence; love of God to man implies beneficence. We should feel benevolence towards God. Do we wish to promote his glory in every possible way? Do we wish, by all means, to promote God's cause on earth? Here is benevolence; it exists in his desires. This benevolence should be followed up with working. Having formed such desires to glorify God, and to honour him among men, the resolution of the soul should be fixed. Well, this will I do, God being my helper;—suffer, if it please him, he being my helper. Then, when the purpose is formed, carry it into action. "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." There is no situation in which Providence has placed us, that we cannot express this resolution and purpose. We shall find much to do, to the bodies of men; and we shall find much to do to the souls of men: and God in his mercy helps man by man. He has not kept his own bounty, of an earthly kind, in his own hand, to dispose of by miracle to mankind, but has established it by certain laws. He has put this into our hands, in order that we, not God, may be the immediate dispensers of it.

Again; this love, that is to be set upon God in a way of benevolence, and on man in a way of beneficence, both which declare its origin, is to be set upon God for a particular purpose, viz., to have him possessing the whole mind; so that the understanding shall see through his light; the judgment shall be guided by his counsel; the will shall be moved by his influence; and all our affections guided by his law; and this in reference to our loving God with all our heart. We should keep

this in view ; to love God with the whole heart ; to be conscious that we love him with the whole heart ; to feel every power of the mind occupied by him. We know this is the case, if we find every power of the mind satisfied. Without this, we shall find something wanting. It is God alone that makes everything satisfying to every soul he dwells in. We are to have him for our portion. We cannot have him for our portion, unless all our affections are placed upon him. God himself, in his whole creation, has made no substitute for the soul of man ; nothing as a substitute for himself, as the Maker of that soul.

The work of grace is for time,—human life ; for the time of probation. It is God's work *in time*. We must not leave to another world the healing of our infectious nature. There is not, in the whole of God's heaven, a soul that has been brought into that state in a separate state. It is here, while in connexion with the body, that God is to work. We have a great outcry made against us Methodists, for holding the doctrine of *Christian perfection*. Can any man show me a doctrine worth holding, if this is not ? Can he show me anything for which the Son of God died, that is worthy of the infinite expense heaven was put to, if God did not design that the blood of Christ should cleanse from all unrighteousness, and that his Spirit should restore the soul of man to that holiness from which he had fallen by sin ? Did he not come for this very purpose ? and are not all his other acts intermediate acts, done in reference to this only act, the purification of the soul,—the filling it with himself ? Does he give true repentance ? He gives it, in order that man may see the necessity of pardon. Does he give pardon ? He gives it that man may see the necessity of holiness. Does he give holiness ? He gives it, in order that man may be capable of dwelling

with him in his own glory. Brethren, much depends here, under God, on the determination of the human mind. We must watch for these blessings; we must pray for them; we must believe for them; we must expect them from God, because all good comes from him, and all power is derived from him. Let a man lay it down for a truth, that he may be saved: and look at the passion of Jesus Christ, and the promise of his Spirit, and doubt it if you can. Let him set it down as an eternal truth, that it is the will of God concerning him; and then let him be determined to seek this, and through the whole of life to keep it in view—the restoration of his soul: and when filled with God, let him make it his determined purpose to abide and grow in that grace to the end of his days.

“He has set his love upon me;” and because he has done so, “I will deliver him.” What is it that oppresses him? He is still under the power of oppression, less or more, and he groans under his burden. He is not fully saved, but I will deliver him; according to his faith shall be his salvation; whatever measure of confidence he brings before me, shall be his measure of salvation. If he bring a large vessel of faith, he shall carry much salvation away: if he bring but little faith, his supply will be scanty: even a thimble can be filled at the ocean, as well as the largest vessel.

“I will set him on high, because he has known my name.” What is the name of God? We have had frequent opportunities to consider this: we see it means sometimes a particular attribute of God. This man, says God, has known my name. Observe, in the beginning he said, “I will say of Jehovah, he is my Refuge.” He has known God, then, as a God of *mercy*: he has known the name of Jehovah, in reference to himself,—to his own salvation, and therefore said, “He is *my*



God." With an ordinary reader, these names would pass, as expressing the same idea ; but they do not : the one refers to God, in the eternity of his being ; the other constantly refers to him, in common with man : the one is from eternity ; the other is from creation, and God's commerce with that creation. " He hath known my name."—He has considered properly, I need not his service : I need not his love ; it cannot affect me, in my eternity and self-sufficiency, whether this man loves me, or that man hates me : I am independent of all this. " He hath known my name, and I will set him on high." I will exalt him. What has debased the nature of man ? Sin. Why are we so low and vile ? Because we have not the image of God. Why is it that an angel can be said to be high ? Because he is a copy of the divine excellence ; because he is holy and pure. The man who has sinned, and turned to God to find mercy by Jesus Christ, and who gets that mercy for the blotting out his iniquities, and who is looking to have the image of God restored to his soul ; to have every feature filled up, which exists in outline only ; and not only to have the features filled up, but to be perfected ; to be made complete in all the will of God, that man is answering the end of his creation. In a man's justification, the outlines of the Divine image are traced upon the soul, but he should look for redemption from all sin ; he should look to God to cleanse his soul from all impurity ; to have every feature properly revealed, and set in its own light,—in the mass of light and shade which are collected, to exhibit a perfect countenance.

But, after all, there is the being rooted and grounded in love, and the being able to comprehend with all saints what are the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of God, which passeth knowledge ; and the being filled with all the fulness of God. May

the God of heaven, who gave that revelation, save you from detracting from its meaning !

He adds, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him." There is no state of grace, however great or high, that is for a moment supported by anything but the continual influence of the Almighty. Remember, whatever state of grace you may be in, as it required God to produce that state, so it requires God to support it. "On all his glory shall be a defence," to preserve the glorious work.

This is to be had by calling upon God. "He shall call upon me." On this solemn condition, the whole of this most awful and glorious work is suspended. Let a man say in the face of God, "Thou shalt do this for me, whether I call on thee or not." What will God do to that man? He will strip him, and make him to know his own folly. "He shall call," and if he have a heart to pray, I have an ear to hear, and a hand to save. "He shall call, and I will answer him." This is a most positive declaration : "He shall call, and I will answer." Why are we not calling? Why are not our hearts always calling upon him for this salvation? I tell you, the veracity of the Almighty is placed upon this. It cannot be proved that there ever was a call, in God's sense of the word, that he has not answered; for God has said, "I will answer." When he sends forth his cries, I will answer: my Spirit shall answer to his cries; he shall be delivered, and his soul shall be satisfied. When you pray, expect an immediate answer: if your prayer does not require an immediate answer, I do not see any necessity for it. We stand in need of so much, we have so many immediate necessities, in spreading them before God, that we should look for immediate answers to those immediate necessities. Look, then, for

immediate answers to prayers founded on immediate necessities.

“I will be with him in trouble.” There is no exemption from tribulation promised ; not even to the highest saints of God. They shall be tempted and tried : they will be in trouble as other men, for all men suffer ; and they will die as other men, for God has not exempted them from this. Why ? Because all these are pressed into their service ; all will turn to their advantage. It makes no odds what comes to such a character,—what troubles come to him, as he has God with him. “I will be,” are words we have put into our translation : the words of the original are, as I observed before, “In trouble I am with him.” Not, the affliction shall come, and then I will come. No : but from the time that it came, God was there. There is no moment he is absent from the soul that trusts in him. “I am with him” in all his trials and temptations ; in all his sicknesses, and on the failure of his constitution. “I am with him” in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment ; and he shall be with me through eternity.

And he says, “I will deliver him and honour him ; with long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.”—“With length of days.” He shall live as long as it is worth his while to live. Live while God has anything to do *for* him, *by* him, or *in* him ; and beyond that, a man must have lost all greatness of mind that would wish to live a moment. When this is finished, God takes him to heaven. When he has done all in him and for him that he judged necessary for a state of salvation, and done all by him that he chooses to employ him in, then he takes him to his eternal glory. This is called the consummation ; they shall have the issue of all this in the heaven of heavens.

I have now endeavoured to set before you something of what you are called upon to do, under the influence of God's grace; and as it may not be my lot often to address you more,\* I thought it my duty to make a statement last Sunday of what God does for man, and to-day, of what he expects you to do.

May we all meet together in his eternal glory! Amen.

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\* Preached in City Road, London, June 18, 1815. The Dr. was about to remove to Millbrook, in Lancashire; and in the month of August had his name on the stations for Manchester.—EDITOR.

# SERMON LVIII.

## THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

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1 CORINTHIANS ix. 24—27.

24. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25. "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

I AM well aware that this Epistle has been the subject of many sermons, exceedingly useful; and the doctrines contained in it have been frequently brought to the view of our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. It is not, therefore, because I think it has not been sufficiently explained, that I address you from it this morning; but because it comes in the way of our reading, in the service of this day.

Though we have frequently read it and heard it, God keeps it unchanged; it is as applicable to us now as it ever was, and it will be applicable to the latest moment of our lives. Let us consider what it is, in reference to this day, to the present moment of our lives,—what it

is God would now have us to understand from it. What does God speak now in this word? For what purpose is it spoken? Let me hear his voice in reference to this now. Let me derive that profit from this word, brought before me this morning, which we may, and it is intended we should, derive from it.

Perhaps there is not a person, however little acquainted with ancient history, who does not know there is a reference here to the games established among the Greeks. Games have an odd sound in religious matters, but these games were trials of strength and skill. It is a question with me, if they went to these games for diversion or recreation at all; they were solemn trials of skill, intended to keep up the martial spirit of their country. As most of the people who distinguished themselves in these games were afterwards persons of eminence in Greece, it taught persons this lesson,—that courage, skill, and dexterity were necessary to every Greek who wished to be a person of consideration in his country: this induced all to try themselves to the uttermost; and even fathers and mothers were taught that they themselves had a very important part to bear in this; hence all things were attended to that might promote the vigour of their progeny, because the honour of their families depended upon it. Why the apostle should make use of this to illustrate heavenly matters, we do not see at first; we must closely study the subject, in order to discover the reason. Nor do we, at first view, see why the apostle should select three of those exercises which were most formidable, and frequently most fatal, viz., running, wrestling, and boxing. We ask why the Spirit of the holy blessed God should represent anything, in a Christian land, under the notion of running, wrestling, and boxing? Why he should make use of these things, established among heathen men, merely for secu-

lar aggrandisement; why he should use these things to illustrate heavenly matters? The truth is, God, who wills the instruction of men, presses everything into his service. God knows that man cannot be instructed, unless through the medium of his senses. We understand and reason best upon those things which are the most impressive to the senses. He gives these a holy direction, to illustrate the heavenly things he calls them here to understand. If we had nothing concerning these exercises, but what the apostle lays down in this place, we should doubt what use could be made of them, or what was intended by the apostle in referring to them. We could make something out about running, because a Christian's course is frequently considered as a kind of way from earth to heaven; because professors of religion have been considered as persons in that way; and because of the shortness of life, which shows the necessity of alacrity and diligence. We have thought it proper for the apostle to say run, because life is short. All this is proper, and, as this is understood, the best teachers generally confine themselves to this, and say nothing about wrestling and boxing; but we shall try them all this morning.

I remarked before, if we had nothing concerning these exercises but what the apostle says in this place, we should be at a loss to understand what was intended. But we have a very learned Father, Saint Chrysostom, one of the greatest men that lived after the apostles, and who lived in the very time in which these games were celebrated,—for they had not ceased in his time, Christianity not having spread so sufficiently as to have annulled them;—he gives us to understand something concerning the way in which they were conducted, and this leads me to infer he had been present at some of them. He tells us, in the first instance, that when the time came

in which these games were to be celebrated, multitudes of persons attended from all parts. The persons who wished to contend presented themselves to the judges, or the persons employed to regulate these exercises. Not every person who chose was permitted to enter the lists. Proclamation was made by a herald, when a person was proposed, "Who has anything against him? Who can accuse this man?" The object of this inquiry was, to discover whether the person who offered himself was a servant, a slave, a liar, or a thief; or a person who had been disreputable in his neighbourhood. If such a one was found, he was not only erased from the list, but punished for having entered his name in that place. Hence we learn, no one was admitted who was not a man of reputable character. Now consider this, as addressed to the church at Corinth. Corinth was the place where these games were celebrated, to which the apostle refers. They were called the Isthmian games, from the isthmus, or nook of land, where Corinth stood. In that city these games were celebrated.

The church at Corinth was planted by the apostle Paul; and what he planted, was well planted. It was also watered by him; and what he watered, was well watered. Apollos followed him; and what *he* watered, was also well watered. But, unhappily, some bad men rose up among the people, perverted their minds, and gave them a license which the gospel denied them. One of these persons taught, that there was no resurrection; and, if so, no future rewards and punishments. He seems to have been a man of considerable abilities, and of influence in the professing church. These doctrines have a direct tendency to make persons careless and unholy. Now, the great object of Jesus Christ is, to make men holy, without and within. It denies men everything by which the mind is enslaved: in short, it



provides employment for every power, both of body and mind, in that work God intended from the beginning man should do, viz., to serve God, and to serve his generation,—love God, and be useful to his fellow-creatures.

The apostle gives them to understand, that men of a bad character, could not be tolerated in the gospel of Jesus Christ; and therefore, he insisted on the expulsion of those workers of iniquity who had got into the church. He gives them to understand, as every Christian man and woman is to contend for a *crown of glory*, which God, the Righteous Judge, was expected to give, so no man should have this crown who had not contended, and contended lawfully, according to the will of God, laid down in his Word. He takes occasion from this, to refer them to their own national exercises. “Would you admit men to your military list, who are slaves or dishonest; who are thieves or liars; against whom any breach of the laws of civil society could be produced? No! Can you suppose, then, if moral honesty, strictness, attention, uprightness, and truth, as far as you know it, among yourselves, is so essentially necessary to running, wrestling, or boxing, that God will take to heaven, and crown with glory, any man impure and unholy, who is a bad man in his neighbourhood, not living so as to bring honour to the cause with which he is connected?” Thus you see the object of the apostle, and you see with what propriety he brings these things in; and he brings it to their own personal notice—“Know you not;” you, who live on the spot, and who see, every five years, these grand national exercises: and who see how those persons exert themselves to bring honour to their country, and to obtain this fading crown! Well, then, as we have our race to run; as we have our contentions, our wrestlings; as we have a country we want to do honour to, and a crown of glory to obtain, we must act in reference to these

things, in our way, as you do to your things, in your way.

Now, observe, he says, “Know you not that they who run in a race, run all, but one obtaineth the prize; and every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.” This leads me to consider another point. When a person was appointed, he had a very severe discipline to go through: he was obliged to prepare himself, and put himself under the teaching of others; sometimes for the course of a whole year; and the privations he was obliged to go through,—the heat and cold he was obliged to endure,—the self-denial he was required to observe,—all which was considered essential to the probability of success, was no trifling matter. The whole duty was what a strong constitution only could possibly endure: therefore, says the apostle, he that runs, wrestles, and strives, is temperate in all things; no intemperance is allowed. What! will the God of heaven allow intemperance in the Christian church, if these games will not allow intemperance among them? If such indulgences (for I would refer to the very things) if such indulgences as intemperance in eating, drunkenness, thefts, &c.—if a person could not expect ever to be admitted, or if admitted, to be successful, who was addicted to such habits, shall we admit into the church of God, or if admitted, continue as members of that church, such as are thus defiled? Or if we continue them, do we suppose that, in consequence of their being members, that God will crown them? No, says the apostle, for men are not crowned, except they strive lawfully.

To make this more plain and easy to our consciences: I am a candidate for the kingdom of God; I expect a crown of glory,—a crown that fadeth not away; I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one

that beateth the air ; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. As those who contended in these exercises went through a long state and series of painful preparations ; as they were obliged to observe a strict regimen ;—as they must live on food they most disliked ; must take exercise both in heat and cold, they, of course, suffered many hardships and many privations. If all this was necessary for him who expected to succeed in these games, can you expect to succeed in securing a crown of glory, unless you mortify and deny yourselves,—your appetites and passions ? Your bodies should be made the slaves of your souls, and not your souls the slaves of your bodies, which in all unconverted men is the case.

My brethren, when we take into our consideration the nature of the allusion, and the purpose for which the apostle makes it ; when we take these contentions, these exercises, into our thoughts ; when we consider the character of the persons who were permitted to contend, and the persons who were not permitted, and the objects they had in view in contending, and compare all these with what the apostle brings before us, we see with what propriety the allusion is made : “ Know you not that one receiveth the prize ? so run that you may obtain.”

There was the *stadium*, the race-ground on which these persons ran ; and we have an account of what is called the *white line*, within which every person was obliged to keep, and which was to mark to the eye the steps they should choose, if they would run not as uncertainly. I endeavour, says the apostle, to keep the track, that I may not take one step more than I should take, nor take one less ; for if I do this, I shall not be crowned, even if I get first to the goal. I must be careful

not to take a step too much, for if I do this, I shall have a larger circle to go through, and shall, in consequence, most probably be distanced.

My dear brethren, we have little light if we cannot apply this subject, which the apostle has in view, without going farther. Are we in the way to the kingdom of heaven? Is it possible to increase our labour in that way? It is possible we may be in the way, and still not labour enough. How many people lengthen the way—though with the best possible intentions, by putting bodily exercise in the place of spiritual influence—by depending upon fastings, and mortifications, and self-denials only, for salvation. Others, on the other hand, endeavour to shorten the way, by leaving out bodily exercises, pretending to do everything by spiritual influence. Both these persons are wrong; God requires man to keep the body under, and, in order to this, to mortify the deeds of that body. God also requires us to receive the influences of his Spirit; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. The one is taking his course too much on the outside of the white line; the other, too much within the white line. Neither can be crowned, because they do not strive lawfully. We must get into this way, and we must enter lawfully.

Who is the man that wishes to be a member of the Methodists' Society? Who is he that seeks to meet among you? Perhaps, you say, we are not to inquire into his character. It certainly does not so much matter, because we come upon this broad ground,—all are sinners: but there is a wide difference between what a man *was*, and what he *is*. Is he now a drunkard? a thief? a swearer? a liar? When the proclamation is made, should any member prove a drunkard, or a thief, or a swearer, or a liar, his name should be erased. He should not only be out out, but put out with disgrace

Now, my dear brethren, we should take care, that every person who wishes to cast in his lot among us should be saved from sin. What was the ancient rule? It was this, We desire nothing from a person, but a sincere desire to flee from the wrath to come: and the persons who have this desire will appear so, and so, and so. We must take heed that we prove we have this desire by bringing forth those fruits that a person would show, who has such a desire, viz., "to flee from the wrath to come."

Again, my friends, I address you all. You profess Christianity. Christianity is precisely the same it was when the apostles planted it. It is planted upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Do you belong to the church of Christ? "Thank God," say you, "we do." This church of Christ requires you to do so and so; to believe so and so. Does your church require you to believe in any other way? then, it is not God's church. You must see to it, that you are members of the Lord's church, and act in such a way as to expect heaven. What is this? a crown of glory. If you are crowned, it is in consequence of having conquered; and you will not conquer, unless you strive.

Once more, Here is a race, and you are to run it. Am I to strive to outstrip every one who strives with me? I do not think it ever entered into the apostle's mind. No, but strive to get to God; not to outstrip one another, —not to run merely because you have a competitor. There is a crown for every man; the approbation of the God of heaven expressed in these words—"Well done good and faithful servant." The crown contended for at the Isthmian games, was not worth a farthing; it was composed of pine leaves or parsley: there was nothing worth a single farthing in the heathen crown. It was

not the crown, but it was the honour the man obtained. It was not the pine leaves or parsley, for which they contended, but only as they were an indication, that the person had conquered. So, my dear brethren, it is not for a crown made of gold and precious stones, we are to have in the kingdom of heaven, for which we are to contend ; but for the approbation of the Almighty. “ Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

The apostle says, “ Run that ye may obtain.” Every one that ran in the Grecian games did not expect, that every one that ran should get the crown, because, as but one could get it,—each man expected to have the crown. The apostle marks the difference : “ So run that ye may obtain.” Only one of them could get it, but we may all obtain the crown of righteousness. We do not run merely to prevent another reaching the goal before us ; but we run, as there is only a certain time that the course remains open, and that time, perhaps, is short. The apostle does not say, you have so many years, months, hours to run in : but so run, that you may obtain. It is not because this road is not open to every individual, but because it is only for a time open to each individual. “ So run that ye may obtain : ” cease not to run, till you reach the place ;—till you obtain the remission of sins, and the sanctification of your nature here, as a preparation for eternal glory hereafter.

We have found it necessary to urge this, because we are convinced the doctrine is woven through the whole book of God, and that salvation is in proportion to our exertion. We find it necessary to preach what is called the witness of the Spirit of God ; a certain confidence a man has, that his sins are forgiven him for Christ's sake. This assurance have all true Christians, and that in proportion to their faith. I see nothing stronger in the

book of God, that men may see heaven at last, if they will. Then, "So run that ye may obtain." And I cannot say to any man, except I see him reach the goal, that he is safe, for the apostle intimates, that it is a possible case for a man who has almost attained it, to become a castaway.

My dear brethren, it is idle for us to spend our time in hoping to see God, and in attempting to anticipate it. It was not meant to anticipate ; but we are to run—to abide in faith and love, and realize the thing signified. If a man only knows he is in the way, and that he is getting on in the way, then let him engage his thoughts as he pleases ; but I had rather the man would exercise himself in this way :—"How can I bring most honour to God, or to the church of Christ?" These should be his considerations.

If he would reach this place, then let him strive for the mastery : here he refers to the wrestling.

What is a wrestler's business ? To bring down his antagonist, and keep him down. This the apostle refers to in the terms made use of in the 27th verse, "I keep under my body, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." So, we are to bring down our sins ; the sins that easily beset us ; what the apostle calls the well-circumstanced sin,—the sin that finds the strong inclination within. When any propensity well expands itself, this is called the well-circumstanced sin. Now, says the apostle, take your body, and consider it as an enemy. If you do not keep its passions and appetites under lock and key,—if you do not make flesh subject to spirit, then you are conquered. The business is to take heed, that my body lead me not to offend ; that I keep it as a servant to my soul : this, says the apostle, is my ambition. Many talk of ambition—of ambition, separate from any gratification of the

body,—as a simple sin of the mind; but they do not prove it. Our senses have always some sensual gratification in view: there is not a sin of merely simple mind. Hence, the apostle brings in the body as the antagonist of the soul, and it cannot be conquered unless brought down. We learn, that our bodies may become most powerful instruments to the soul; every passion, appetite, and propensity; everything that belongs to us as animal beings may be brought into the service of our souls: everything may be pressed into its service and sanctified to God. “Bring it into subjection.” In order to this, have a proper end always in view. Watch where the strength of your adversary lies.

When the apostle tells you, he brings his body into subjection, he refers to *boxers*; who, to get power of their adversaries, endeavour to blind their eyes. So, says the apostle, see what is the sin of your life, or the sin of your business: find out this sin; deprive it of its advantage against you. If you find an appetite gain strength, by a particular mode of living, deprive it of nourishment by changing your mode of life—by denying yourselves. If you are tempted to any particular sin in your business, either give up the sin, or abandon that way of life.

We have now gone through the principal expressions of the apostle, and the principal things to which the apostle alluded. My brethren, I have one observation to make upon the whole. Exercise seems to be so necessary to the life of man, that men cannot live to any good purpose without it. In coming along the streets this morning, and seeing the people running, I said, this is a useful lesson: if they do not run, they freeze;\* and

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\* This was on the morning of Jan. 22, 1815; and the sermon was delivered in City Road, London.—EDITOR.



we also freeze, if we do not continue to exercise ourselves in faith and prayer. My brethren, I do not see a soul of man can keep the consolations of God's Spirit, unless he is active. If you do not run, you freeze ; you cannot keep yourselves warm, unless you are active and diligent. If I see you careless, and not putting forth the strength God has given, I inquire, Are you warm ? are you healthy ? Have you a vigorous appetite ? And so in religion : I would ask, do you enjoy the salvation of God ? I would say, it is my belief, you have it not, because you are careless. You are not running to keep yourselves warm. Jesus went about doing good, and the Spirit of Jesus lives in them who go about doing good. I would give very little for that religion, which does not lead men to labour, in order to bring glory to God, and good to our fellow-creatures. If we look to the conclusion, we shall see the necessity of exercising ourselves in this way : " Lest I should be a cast-away." We have taken this, in reference only to the preacher ; but we ought each of us to take it to ourselves. The man that 'does not run, as God would have him :—that does not bring his body into subjection, that man will be a cast-away. In order to prevent this, the apostle ran, wrestled, and brought his body into subjection.

Let us lay the whole of this to heart, and as God, in the course of his providence, brought the passage before us, let us permit it to have all the influence on our hearts which God intended it should have. Amen.

## SERMON LIX.

### THE CHARACTERISTIC AFFECTION AND PRIME OBJECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

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1 THESS. ii. 11, 12.

11. "As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

12. "That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

I HAVE always thought it well to inform my congregation, how much they needed to consider the character of the people to whom the apostles, or other inspired men who wrote, addressed their letters, prophecies, or other accounts, at whatsoever time, because—as they always considered the characters of the people, not simply their names or places of abode, their persons, not with reference to any particular part of society with which they were connected, but always their moral character, the state of their minds as manifested by the tenor of their conduct—so they always suited their words to that state of character and mind which thus distinguished them. Now we shall see at once in considering this point, how reasonable it is, and how profitable it may be. If, for

instance, we find a promise of God delivered to the people, we have only to examine, not whether we are Thessalonians, or Colossians, or Ephesians, or Romans, or distinguished by whatsoever name or address the epistles are noted and known, but whether we are of the same character, whether the same kind of address is suited to us, in order to ascertain whether we have a right to take the promise made to them ; seeing that, if we have, it is because we have the same mind and feelings, and can claim the fulfilment of the promise with as much confidence as they to whom the words were originally addressed.

You will see and feel, I hope, the importance of this observation ; and therefore you must not take these words, read this morning, considered merely as a part of Scripture generally, but as I am proposing to consider them, through God's mercy, as a portion that suits you ; having reason to believe that you bear the same character. Well, to help you so far, I will in a few words, inform you to whom the epistle was written. It was written, then, not merely to the people dwelling at Thessalonica, but "to those who were in God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ." That was the way in which they were particularly known to the apostle ; and by using these terms, he gives you the reason of all that is said in the subsequent part of the epistle. You will find too, that what is there said is strictly suited to persons bearing this character—persons who were in God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. You know so much of Christianity, its nature and spirit—you know so much of religion, its influence in general, and its influence upon you, that you can be at no loss to ascertain the general meaning of these terms. It is implied, that the persons were genuine Christians—namely, that they had the spirit of our Lord Jesus—that they had taken

him as the true Messiah, looked to God through him as the only sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction in his death and passion, for the sins of the whole world ; that they earnestly looked for the fulfilment of the utmost blessings of the gospel of peace ; and that as they were thus united to God, firmly trusting in his name, submitting to his authority and will, so they believed in him for the salvation they needed through the Son of his love, assured that “all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus”—all given from God’s eternal truth—manifestations of God’s infinite love to a lost world ; the whole way of his mercy and goodness being made plain by the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus. You need not wonder then at what the apostle afterwards says : “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then he goes on to tell them all those blessed things which you may read in the epistle at your leisure ; and among the rest, what I have this morning read, particularly the two verses of the text.

The first thing that will, I suppose, strike your mind, is the near and loving relation that seemed to subsist between the apostle and this people. It has often been remarked that this is supposed to have been the first public epistle that St. Paul wrote ; that he wrote it to a people who had not long before received the gospel of the grace of God, that they were in what we commonly call their *first love* ; and certainly it is a pity that there should exist such a thing as a second love, since it implies that the first has been lost. There was nothing found at all reprehensible in their conduct or spirit ; and hence the whole epistle is full of love and affection.

Now, my dear friends, such persons, related to such an apostle, must have been in a very blessed state, and the union must have been such as God would smile

upon ; and this epistle, which had resulted from such an affectionate feeling in the apostle towards them, did not originate from a feeling which he had to that church in preference to all other churches, because he loved people in proportion as they loved and served the Lord Jesus Christ ; but it was raised up in him by the influence of God's Eternal Spirit. "This people," said God, "are my people ;" they are in me through my dear Son Jesus Christ ; and he it was who gave the apostle, by inspiration of his Spirit, to write those things for their comfort, support, and encouragement.

I do not say, that I hope such is your state, and that you are living in a state of harmony with your spiritual instructors, for I have no reason to doubt it. I do not know many of you now. You have outgrown my acquaintance ; and most of those to whom I first ministered when this chapel was built,\* and at the other place at the Gate, before there was any hope of having such a chapel as this erected, are gone—gone, I trust, to their heavenly Father. And you may be their children, endeavouring to tread in their steps ; you find the same kind of preaching, the same gospel, accompanied with the same power and demonstration, you have the same church privileges, are under the same discipline, getting on in the same way, having the same religious experience, and loving the same God, loving him through the Son of his love ; you love your teachers and magnify God for them, even as they love you, and thank God that they are placed among you, having reason to magnify his name, because he has given them to see of the fruit of their labours.

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\* Lambeth Chapel. He was preaching this sermon for the benefit of the Sunday-schools, Nov. 6, 1831.—EDITOR.

Well, listen a little, that you may see how the apostle treated the persons to whom his epistle was addressed. He represents himself as a tender, compassionate, and in all cases a feeling *father*. “Ye remember, brethren,” said he, “our labour and travail.” He did not merely tell them, speak to them, or write to them, he laboured to impress their minds with divine things. He laboured in the Lord, and in this spirit he spoke to their hearts. They saw that he was a person duly affected with the importance of his ministry, and they felt themselves affected in the same way; for as the apostle preached, so they believed. The same spirit produces its own likeness; and as they found him very much in earnest for their souls, they felt themselves very much concerned for their own souls. Hence there was a correspondency of feeling between the preacher and his hearers; they came not to see or listen to the *man*, but to receive the word of *God* from his mouth, and take warning from him. They came to hear of Jesus, the length, and breadth, and depth of his salvation. They came to the place where God had promised to meet them, even if there had been only two or three there assembled in his name, expecting to meet him in his sanctuary, and they were not disappointed. There they met with God, and he that watered was watered again, and the people were all blessed of the Most High, as I hope you will all be this morning.

If you look up to God, he will not fail to bless you; for he has a blessing for every soul under this roof, and is here to dispense it. He not only fills the heaven and earth by the necessity of his infinitude, but is present, in a particular manner, where two or three are assembled together in his name, to worship in his temple. And he comes there for the mere purpose of saving his people—he comes to bless you; he is called the Saviour—he

comes to give you what you need, what you want, and what you wish. And if your hearts be right before him, you shall receive everything which he sees at all necessary for you. And perhaps he sees far more of these things with reference to your salvation, than you have ever yet been able yourselves to calculate ; and you may get not only a larger insight into your necessities, and the infinitude of his mercies, but into his present willingness to fill you with his salvation, and make you happy in his love.

“ As being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing,” he adds, “ to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us.” It was, my friends, a dangerous thing in those times, to believe the gospel ; and it was much more dangerous to proclaim it, because it was against the governor of the world—the great devil—and everything that was connected with him. Certainly, then he had great wrath ; for he saw that his time of universal government was but short, and he well knew that Jesus had seen him some time before fall like lightning from heaven. He saw that the government was gone, that universal governor he could be no more, that his kingdom was about to be destroyed ; for he had heard Jesus proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand, and calling on the people to believe on him, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. He saw the Saviour’s agony and bloody sweat, he saw his cross and passion, his death and burial, he witnessed his glorious resurrection and ascension, and he saw to his confusion and dismay, as he sees to the present hour, the coming of the Holy Ghost, which Holy Ghost never returned, so to speak, to his locality, the summit of eternal glory, but has continued on earth with the sons of men, being

one of those gifts which Jesus purchased for the rebellious, that the Lord might dwell among them.

He tells them again, that, “they were witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably he had behaved himself.” They were witnesses, because they had seen and heard what the apostle did and said. They entered into his manner, they took knowledge of his spirit, of his words, and of his manner of speaking them, and his conduct and manner of walk indicated a spirit that could only come from God. They saw then “how holily and justly he had walked among them; and how he exhorted every man, comforting and charging them, even as a father his children, that they should walk worthy of God, who had called them unto his kingdom and glory.”

Looking into these words, it would appear that the apostles exhorted the people, comforted the people, and charged them, in reference to one great point—walking worthy of God; and for one great reason, because that God had called them to his kingdom, the kingdom of heaven here below, and the kingdom of glory above. There was a bright prospect set before them; and here was strong reason why they should make proper use of the grace given unto them, and God should be properly magnified in giving them that grace.

Let us examine these words, which point out, in this case, *ministerial labour*, and how it was done. The apostle tells us, that “he exhorted, comforted, and charged the people.” Exhortation, properly speaking, advice—he gave advice to the people. The apostles were the counsellors of the different churches that God placed under their care, advising them what to receive, what to believe, what to do. They laid these things before them, pointing out to them their necessity, their beauty, and



their excellence. You are ignorant, it is true ; God will teach you, but you must look for the teaching ; the salvation of your souls is a matter of infinite importance—you must endeavour to get saved. Never spend your time in *wishing* to be saved, and *hoping* to be saved, and *trusting* to be saved ; that will not answer the end. People are losing their souls by hundreds every day, by wishing, and hoping, and trusting to be saved ; satisfying themselves with merely thus wishing, hoping, and trusting. They trust that their hearts are upright ; suppose they are, it does not therefore follow, that all is right in the sight of God. Jesus Christ speaks of some that “*seek* to enter in at the strait gate.” Now, seeking to enter in at the strait gate is very well ; but it does not save any man, nor is that Spirit there which Jesus connects with salvation ; and hence he says, “*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate.” It is astonishing how this word is misapplied and misunderstood ; but a more important word in the whole system of advice and exhortation from our Lord Jesus, is not to be found in this blessed book. There is a strait gate that leads to the heavenly country, and through that gate you must go. If a man come up to that gate, and find it apparently bolted or barred against him, he may *seek* for everlasting without getting in ; but the man you will find who *strives*, is one who will shoot the bolt if he can, and break the gate, if he have no other resort, and think himself justified in doing so, any how, that he may obtain the place where alone is rest and safety. There must then be a great difference between the man who seeks, and the man who strives ; and you need not wonder when Jesus Christ tells you that many shall seek, but shall not be able, simply and solely because they do not strive, to enter in. Now this was one of the first parts of the apostle’s advice to this people—that they should not be

content with good wishes, nor even with divine feelings, in reference to salvation, but that they should get saved, consciously saved. And to you, my friends, I say, look well to it that you are saved ; and have such evidence of it, as that you can appeal to your God that you are in a state of salvation, because he has brought you into it ; and that you are going forward, because you are depending on him, and receiving strength from him.

This is one of the prime parts of our ministry, to exhort and advise the people, being counsellors with God Almighty on their behalf ; that they enter in at the strait gate and get saved, and receive sufficient evidence of this. I assure you, my friends, it is a very awful thing to die. I believe I all but lost my life at one time, having been nearly drowned ; and I know it is not an easy thing to appear before God, and to have confidence in being shortly introduced into his presence ; for he is a just God, though he is merciful ; and though he is our heavenly Father, yet he is a holy God, and into his heaven he will neither admit you nor me, unless saved from our sins.

Well, receiving such advice from the apostle, it is natural to suppose that some of the people might be discouraged. Notwithstanding all our good wishes, we can do no good without God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the fountain of all good ; and it is our duty and our interest to see that we are in him, through the Son of his love, and that we trust in nothing but the infinite merit of his blood for our salvation. But here the apostle gives us to understand that there is far more to be done ; that we must see what the fruit of our faith and confidence in God is, and whether they have produced any striking and permanent change in our hearts, lives, and conversation. I should tell you another thing. These people would think perhaps that because they had

heard the inspired apostle of God, and had a church established among them, they should be as holy as angels, and as useful as it was possible for men to be ; and, finding that they had little in comparison to what they thought, and to what they should have, in order to answer the purposes for which God gave them being, and for which he gave them Jesus Christ, they might feel disconsolate. Now, what would people in such circumstances, and with such feelings need ? They needed *comfort* ; and hence the apostle, in the next place, is said to have comforted them : “ I know your sincerity : God has made you what you are : he has done much for you, in having changed your hearts from a dependence on the world to a dependence on himself, and turning you from idols to the living and true God ; and you are seeking, under his direction and influence, further revelations of his power and goodness. But you find you have not profited as you should. Is that any reason that you may not ? You are not saved so far as you ought ; but is that any reason why you may not or that you are not to be, and that fully ? You are at present without all that grace which you might have ; but is that any reason why you may not receive that grace, and enter into it now ? ” Thus, then, he comforted them. He said, “ take courage ; do not fear, notwithstanding it is not so with you as it should be ; and at the same time, find fault with yourself ; while you are searching your hearts, judge and condemn yourselves ; judge yourselves, that ye be not judged of the Lord ; condemn yourselves, that ye be not condemned of the Almighty ; but let not that be the means of slackening your faith, or taking away your courage and confidence ; but come boldly to the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy ; for such boldness of coming, and such confidence in appearing, even in the presence of God has been pur-

chased for you, and is held out to you. God will not plead against you with his great power, but will put strength in you to plead with him.

I exhort and advise you, then, to look for the things which God has promised, and for more of the same grace that you possess. You need not despair because you have not profited so much as you should have done. "Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation ;" and God is ready to save, he waiteth to be gracious ; and he saves all who come unto him through his Son Jesus Christ.

Well, there was something else to be done, and as the apostle of God he goes on to charge them, and shows them that he had authority from his Maker to say unto them, be found watching, praying, depending upon him, and working with him ; and whatever love you have received from him, and whatever faith you have in him, let that faith work together with love, and let the fruit of that working of faith and love appear in you, profiting not only your own souls, but by being profitable to others ; labouring as God would have you to labour, not only to get your own souls saved, but to get your neighbours and families brought with you to heaven. I charge you, as the apostle would have said, to appear at the throne of God, upon the right hand of the Most High. I command you to look to him for that grace which is able to save you, that you may appear before him, and have confidence at the coming of Christ. I charge you to be diligent in season and out of season. I command you, in the name of the living God, that you "cast aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset you, and that you run patiently,"—viz., perseveringly,—  
"the race that is set before you." I do not say so, because you have not been doing well, but you must do better ; not because you have not been getting on in the

divine life, but you must get farther on ; not that you have not been running, but you must run more quickly ; not that you have not been doing some good, but you must do all the good which God has put it in your power to do ; not that you have not been endeavouring to advance the glory of God, but you must do it more fervently and more abundantly, abounding in it ; and that although you have much of God's love in you, you must have more, that you may abound in all righteousness and in all holiness ; in the bringing of all glory to God, and in doing all the good you can to mankind.

Then he said, " we exhorted, comforted, and charged you." Not only one or many of you, but all—every one of you. My dear friends, never suppose that when your preacher is preaching he has some one, or two, or three merely in his view. I would not give a farthing for his preaching if he has not every soul under his eye and voice. How does he know who most wants the advice, or comfort, or charge which he is giving ? He has authority from God to advise, to comfort, to charge, not this man, or any other, but *all* men. We do not believe that creed which says, that Jesus Christ has not died for every man—meaning, by every man, all men, all human beings ; we believe that he died for every soul of man, all human beings ; and therefore, we consider, that every soul of man may be saved ; and hence, address to every man our exhortations, consolations, and charges.

You must all attend to these things, because all of you may be lost, and Satan will ruin you if he can. But there is a greater probability that you will be saved. Away with that notion, that there is but a bare probability that you will be saved at all. I wonder that any are lost, when I find God in his endless compassion and mercy providing the sacrifice of the Son of his love ; and that Jesus, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the God-

head bodily, has poured out his Spirit upon all flesh, and is waiting to be gracious, and to save all who come to him ; and that there is the Eternal Spirit always at hand, in every congregation, to seal the truth of God on the minds of the people. Now, all that that poor devil can do, is, by his own influence, to divert the mind from these things, to turn it to worldly vanities, or to keep it depending upon anything that is not God, and that cannot save them, or keep them from seriously thinking about their souls ; and he often makes but little out, even of these. I have heard religious people talking about their temptations ; and, in general, I have heard that, by the grace of God, they overcame them. The devil did try, one would say, to deceive me, and seemed to succeed for a time ; but God enlightened me, and gave me to see it was a snare, and I fled from it, or God broke it, and I got safely through it. So that I have found, in general, that the devil had not succeeded ; and that the victory generally, if not universally, was on the side of Jesus Christ. Now, when you have God for you,—when you have Jesus Christ for you,—when you have the Eternal Spirit for you,—you cannot but be saved if you make use of the means God has put in your power.

From all these things we should take much encouragement. We should set it down, as an undoubted truth, that we shall be saved if we earnestly seek it,—that peradventures do not exist at all in this business,—that it is a certain thing, as David spoke in one place,—“Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel while I live, and afterwards receive me to thy glory.” There is not a word here about hoping merely to be saved, of hoping merely that he would at last get to glory—not a tittle of it ; because the man was certainly in earnest for his soul, and he knew that his soul would be saved, as certainly

as God existed, if he continued to look up and trust in God ; and that he had determined upon. "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to thy glory." The place is prepared for me, and God is preparing me for the place.

Having set it down, as an indisputable truth, that you shall be saved, if you act according to the exhortations, consolations, and charges that you receive from God's messengers, you must begin to set out afresh for God's kingdom. Perhaps you find that you have been living on old experience for some time. You should have something more to-day than you had yesterday ; if this Sabbath's sun sets without your getting nearer heaven than you were last Sabbath, you will not have corresponded with the Divine mind—you will not have acted well ; and I think you will have received the grace of the preaching in vain.

It is a grand thing to expect much good. Expectation is faith—a measure of faith. He that expects no good, has no faith to receive good. He that gives up his case as lost, is certainly very nearly being lost. He that expects to be saved, waits to be saved, and looks to God for being saved, is in a fair way of coming to eternal glory. Now, the apostle, in order to make all Christians duly active, and show forth the virtue of him who called them out of darkness into marvellous light, says, I have done all this in order that you might walk worthy of God. Why should you walk worthy of God ? Because he has called you to his kingdom and glory. Here, then, my brethren, we must look to this reason before we look to the exhortation founded upon it ; God has called you to his kingdom. I make a distinction here. I do not think this kingdom means, in this place, the glory of God, in what is called the heavenly world ; I think that is expressed in the term "glory," in the succeeding part

of the clause. It is true that it might be said, it is an Hebraism, and that it signifies a glorious kingdom ; but remember, that that kingdom which Jesus Christ proclaimed, and which his evangelists proclaimed after him, by his unction and authority, was that kingdom which he came to establish here below. It was God's reign—Christ's reign and government in the souls, hearts, minds, and lives of mankind.

And what is that kingdom ? It is a state of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. None of these have reference to the other world, but reference to this. Man is unrighteous—contrary to right, and contrary to justice. He owed his life to God, but he acted unrighteously,—he did not give it to God. He owed a great deal to himself ; but he cheated and defrauded himself, and did not give himself his due ; for every sinner against his own soul, sinning against his advantages, is stealing from himself. He seems a desperate thief who would rob himself. One could hardly conceive that such a thing could be ; but so it is ; and the man who does not receive the salvation which God has provided for him, is robbing and plundering himself. Then there is something that he owes to his neighbour. He has not helped him as he should have done. He had a power to benefit and help him, but he has not laboured for his interest as he should have done, therefore, he has been acting unrighteously in reference to his neighbour. God, then, comes to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and justice, and peace among the children of men. We have a great talk about liberty ; and liberty is a precious thing. Civil liberty is a glorious thing. I believe it comes from heaven, and should be guarded with care by man ; but the liberty to love God, with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and mind—the liberty to be useful, to the utmost of our power, to our fellow-creatures—that is,



the great liberty that comes from God ; and when we see this as we should, we shall glorify God, and benefit our neighbour. Then the two grand principles of the law come into free action, and produce their full effect, and enable us to love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. God, then, has called you to this kingdom of righteousness—he has called you to be a righteous people, to be a happy and a comfortable people, and he has given you peace. You know well what it is to have a heart that is not at unity with itself. You know what a miserable thing it is not to have the peace of God dwelling in you. You have seen, perhaps, in travelling over districts that were disturbed, and proclaimed to be out of the king's peace, that the wholesome civil institutions had no influence, nor were used in reference to the rebels throughout the districts : they were proclaimed to be out of the king's peace, and delivered up, as it were, into the hands of the soldiery. This is, indeed, a dismal sight ; but to be out of the peace of the God of heaven is an awful thing. If we have not the King's peace—the peace of God that passeth all understanding—how wretchedly must we get on in life ! But it is a part of the kingdom which God has called you to, the feeling that God has taken you into his favour, that you are in the King's peace ; so that his peace flows into your heart as a river, and the righteousness, which is another part of the kingdom, will then abound as the waves of the sea.

I take for granted that it is the will of God that you should be happy in your religion. You have heard a great deal about that religion which was not expected to make men happy in this world. Surely we have need of a religion that will make us happy in this world. If we look to the kingdom of heaven in its present state of

glory, there is no devil, no death, no sickness, no want ; nothing that we can call by the name of poverty there. But here we have all these trials, difficulties, and poverty, and sometimes what we call cross providences,—that is, things that do not appear to work well, because God is working to bring about good ; and many things may appear to us not quite consistent with the great general purpose which God is accomplishing. Well, brethren, you must look for the peace and joy here. There is a joy in the Holy Ghost that is to be had in the midst of all the trials and difficulties and distresses ; and even if we had the *cholera morbus* among us, the providence of God is sufficient to keep heaven within, and the love of God shed abroad there, as the joy of our hearts, and can make us triumph even in the midst of all our difficulties. There is no state of things that can find any genuine Christian in a situation but he must be happy. Whatever he may suffer, however he may be deprived of this or the other thing, the power of the Holy Ghost can make and keep him happy on earth, and cause him to pass through things temporal, so as not to lose the things eternal. Now, God has called you to this kingdom—a kingdom all righteousness, all order, all justice, all peace ; and where this peace exists, no external disturbance, while God keeps the heart, can harass the mind. The joy which he inspires by his Spirit, is a happiness that the world cannot give, nor take away, nor affect ; it is not subject to the changes or chances to which all mortal things are liable. God calls you, I say, to this. Do you hear that call ? Come and be happy ; come and be made righteous ; come and be filled with peace ; come and share my joy, and be happy in the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit.

But what is to be the issue ? God has called you to his glory. You will get out of the trials and sufferings

of this world ; God will sustain you in them, and cause you to be profited by them ; they will work together for your good while you are loving God and endeavouring to serve him, and he will take you at last to his heaven. Look to God and you will have it, for he will give it to you ; you will have the blessing that Jesus bought by his blood, and you will feel that you are of God, by the Spirit which he has given you ; and all those doubts and fears, which prey on your mind, and make you incapable of rejoicing in your God, and triumphing in difficulties, will be taken away ; and you will have such evidence of God's love in your souls, that you can have no doubt of his continuance as your counsellor, and of your final introduction into his glory.

I have often thought of those words which we have used in our religious service, "Thou hast opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." And is it not a glorious thing, that in no part of the experience of the followers of God, from the time when Jesus was manifested in the flesh to the present day, has it been heard of that kingdom which certainly was never, in that sense, opened before, has since ever been shut ? The kingdom of heaven was opened by the entrance of Jesus Christ, which was thus predicted, "Lift up your heads, ye gates, and let the King of Glory come in." And we have no intimation, that when the King of Glory went in, the gates closed. No, he went in, that you may all go in at the same gate, and sit on the same throne, in that state of glory for which you shall be prepared by the grace and influence of your God received here. Then he has called you to this glory. What a high calling it is ! What a glorious thing, for you who are for God, to look upon yourselves as singled out, every man of you, and called to his kingdom and glory !

Now, my friends, look over the whole of the passages

of the chapter, and see what use you can make of them in reference to your situation in life. You should give God glory for what he has done for you. Can you ever magnify his mercy sufficiently for the incarnation of Jesus? Can you look upon that most sacred person, God manifest in the flesh, without astonishment and surprise,—taking your burden upon him, and bearing, in his own body, the punishment of your sins upon the tree,—being scourged, that by his stripes you might be healed,—and dying, that you might live for ever? Can you look upon that Holy Ghost who takes of the things that are Christ's and shows them to you, and who is working now upon you, and sufficiently testify your gratitude to this holy and triune God, for what he has thus done for you, what he is doing in you, and what he has promised to do? “Oh, that I knew,” says one, “where I might find him!” Do any of you inquire? “Oh, that I knew what I could do to express my love and obligation more fervently to God,” says another. That is a good spirit, and I am glad that you feel thus. Some time ago I was preaching at Harrow, and it came into my mind, that there were present a number of people not anxious about their souls; but there were some good people among them; they were resting, not getting forward in the divine life, and I said, “I know you are anxious to love God more and serve him better;” and then, in my blunt way, I said, “Why don't you? What is to hinder you? Why should you not arise and shake yourself from the miserable dust which surrounds you, and call on your God, and get out of the place in which you have been so long seeing heaven afar off, and endeavour to make the distance between you and it shorter?” Now, that was in a particular manner blessed to the people.

So I say to you; and I will tell you what to do. Here

are four hundred poor children, who, but for the efforts of this school, would perhaps never have been taught the fear of God. I never wish to talk about debts upon the work of God; but I do think that God's people should engage, as far as his providence gives them power, and if they incur any kind of debt, then it gives them a claim on God's providence; and if they look into their business, bad as times are—if they look into their mode of life strictly, they may find that there is something they can save—they have gained a something which they can spare, and by the grace of God it ought to be devoted to the promotion of his glory. If there be a debt on God's house or the school, we must get it wiped off; and God, this morning, gives you an opportunity of contributing with liberality, according to what he has put into your hand, and according to the feelings he has put into your heart, towards this important undertaking. You must also comfort those men who give up their time and labour to this good work—you must encourage their society, and they will be encouraged when the people come forward and support the work, and they will go on with more speed, and fresh confidence and courage. Why should not these four hundred poor children whom you thus educate—why should they not become four hundred members extra in the church of Jesus Christ, in a very few years from this? It is for this purpose that God, in the course of providence, places them under your instruction and guidance—that the ranks of the church may be filled up when thinned by death, and that the rising generation may be trained in the knowledge of the true God, and the faith of his Son. Amen.

## SERMON LX.

### THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONDESCENDING ENTREATY OF GOD TO SINNERS.

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ISAIAH i. 18.

“Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

WE cannot help thinking, that if God condescended to speak to man at all, it must be a very high condescension indeed. When we consider, even as we are able to consider the subject, the dignity of his nature—the holiness of that nature—the infinitude of his perfections ; and when we turn our eyes in upon ourselves—when we look into our own hearts, reflect on our past ways, we may well be astonished, that a God of such infinite excellence should concern himself with persons as worthless as we are, and as evil as we have been.

That he is not willing that any should perish, he has given us—blessed be his name !—a sufficient proof ; and we have here such a manifestation of his condescension as we can never sufficiently acknowledge — that God should call upon men, to reason with them on the nature of their conduct, and the nature of his towards them, in order that they might show any reason, if such existed, why they have offended against him ; and any reason,

if such could possibly exist, why they should not expect that punishment which they deserved.

But what does the Almighty mean, when he says to the people, "Come, and let us reason together"? On looking a little more closely than we are able to do, on cursorily reading the chapter, to find out the character of the people—I mean their character in reference to what our text speaks, we shall see the ground on which God calls upon them to reason with him. Nor must we so far forget ourselves, as to suppose that we are not concerned in what is here said, relative to the people spoken of, who have lived so long before us; for God has so calculated his word, that it applies to all the generations of men, as far as their character answers the description given of those to whom any portion of it was originally sent. And this is one sacred and rational rule, which I have noticed elsewhere, and which we should always attend to, in reading this book of God, and that all the ministers of his word should carefully observe in treating upon it—that that word is calculated for the character, and not for a particular people—for the people, and not for a particular nation; so that whosoever fits the character that God has given in his word of a particular nation, may take all that God has so spoken concerning that nation originally. And whatsoever he says concerning any particular person, relative to his failings, relative to his doings, relative to his prospects, if we find that the character suits us, we have authority to take it to ourselves; and we should take it to ourselves, whether what God wrote concerning these characters be in reference to judgment or in reference to mercy.

Let us not forget ourselves, my friends, when we consider the character of the Jews, to whom the Almighty, in the most solemn and important manner, addressed himself in this chapter. Who were they? You must

lose sight of their nationality as Jews, and as under a particular dispensation, which we are accustomed to call the Mosaic. We must look at them in their moral character. And what were they? A people who had been called from darkness into the light of God—a people to whom God gave a revelation of himself; not merely a revelation of his infinite righteousness, expressed in a just and holy law, but a revelation of his mercy and kindness, in reference to the sons and daughters of men. We must mark those things that early distinguished the Jews as a people, who were governed by rites and ceremonies, and consider those things that God spake to them and commanded, by which their minds were to be brought under the dominion of his will, and by which their whole conduct should be regulated according to his righteous law.

This people, then, though deeply fallen in the time of this prophet, had not yet lost all knowledge of the Supreme Being—had not lost all respect for his name; and notwithstanding all the evils which are here spoken of them, it is stated, in regard to them, that they had the form of godliness, though they were destitute of its power. They acknowledged a Supreme Being, and they worshipped him according to those prescriptions of his own. Leaving the rites and ceremonies of their dispensation out of the question, they worshipped him by sacrificial offerings, always considered expressive of the guilt of the people offering them, the necessity of an atonement, and a persuasion that God would condescend to receive an atonement of their hands. Their sacrifices always implied that sin had been committed, by which the life of the sinner had been forfeited; and that God chose to point at a way in which the sinner was to be reconciled unto himself, through the death of an innocent animal being accepted for them; that thus that life



which had been forfeited to divine justice by transgression, might thereby be preserved.

We, who have lived to see the gospel day, know that these burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin were never understood as terminating, or available in themselves; they were only indicative of something infinitely greater, something that could give a reason why God should receive man into his favour—why he might expect a remission of his sins, and be saved, with all the power of an endless life. Nor was there a sacrifice that was offered by the Jews, even by the command of God, that did not derive all its excellence and availableness from that sacrifice that was pre-ordained by God's justice and mercy—the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

There was a time when sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings for sin availed. God had appointed them for all. A time arose in the Divine mind, when these things could no longer avail, in reference to which he says, "Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offering, and offerings for sin, I will not ;" and then we find a person suddenly breaking in upon this awful declaration of the Most High, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God ! In the volume of the book it is written of me, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."\* And we find that this points out Jesus Christ in his incarnation, and that body which was to be subject to such a death, on account of the sin of the world. And farther discoveries by the Spirit of prophecy give us to understand, that this person was no less than God manifest in the flesh ; that it was through his sufferings and death—by his resurrection from the

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\* See Sermon XXVI.

dead—his appearing at the right hand of God, and making intercession for men, that the lost world must be saved ; and that those who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I say, these Jews did offer up these sacrifices, and there were very few of them so lost in ignorance of Christ, as to suppose that the offering of a sheep or an heifer, or the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats, could cancel the sins they had committed against the great God ; and as the prophet stood there, to point out him who was coming, and to excite the expectation of the nation itself, in reference to the Messiah, they offered sacrifices, more or less, in reference to this great availing atonement. These people, then, were not infidels. The Lord gives us to understand here, that they attended the solemn assemblies—did not neglect coming together at those times and seasons which were prescribed for them, as a people acknowledging God as their sovereign and supporter, to call on his name, to entreat his favour, and to give him those praises that were due unto him. We find, however, notwithstanding, that their hearts were far from him ; they seemed to have their faces toward heaven, using the ordinances of God, and yet living in sin and transgression ; so that the prophet makes use of a very emphatic word to describe their conduct : “They have gone away backward ;” not meaning that they merely had retrograded, or gone back from the ordinances of God ; but that, while they were using these very ordinances—while they were professing their faith in this God—while they were acknowledging him as the dispenser of their blessings—while their faces were towards him and the remembrance of his name—they had gone back, in the affections of their hearts, from the God of heaven. A most remarkable description ; and, I am afraid, a description by which

multitudes of persons professing faith in the God of heaven, and in the Son of his love, are most awfully designated. While attending on the ordinances of God with external decency and respect, their hearts and affections are attached to the world—attached to present things, and under the dominion of passion and appetite, rather than of reason and conscience. They are retrograding from the spirit of piety, when they are professing godliness, and keeping up a decent outward appearance among men.

God forbid, my friends, that I should think this concerning any one of you ; and yet I must say that my fear is, that this points out the state of multitudes of persons called Christians. We should take heed, that in all our use of the ordinances of God, we are gaining ground on what is commonly called morality ; and true morality will never be produced without the grace and Spirit of the living God ; our great object being to inquire whether, in the present day, we are better or worse than we were twenty or forty years ago, according to our particular ages when we professed our faith in God.

Such, then, was the state of the Jews, as just referred to ; they had the form, but they were without the power : they were once a living people, they were now dead in all sorts of sin ; but not so far from all moral feeling, as not to be capable, on the remonstrance of God by his prophet, to know the state they were in. And thus he speaks in the way of judgment. After having enumerated the mercies that he had conferred upon them, he tells them the evil that must necessarily come upon them, in consequence of their having abandoned the spirit of his worship, and the spirit of his religion, and yet still kept up the decencies and moral show of the things that concerned their eternal peace. He threatens them with judgment—he threatens them

with disease. He represents their state, indeed, as a state of disease; and illustrates it by pointing out the state of a person who is totally destitute of all that is called health—under the influence of a malady, which renders him loathsome in the sight of society, because he is “full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, that have not been bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”

Now we should look into what is here said concerning God’s “reasoning” with the Jews. We might have expected to hear declarations of just indignation and wrath, because they had so grievously offended him; a threatening to cut them off from the inheritance of their fathers, and this expulsion from their inheritance only as a proof that they were for ever cut off from God. But it is not so. He says, “Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;” intimating that their sin was of the deepest kind, and that it was God alone who could take away its guilt from the conscience, and take away its evil influence from the mind. What does this reasoning imply? I know it is fashionable for many people, who are a religious kind of people, to say we have nothing to do with reasoning in religion. Such persons should get this chapter cut out of the Bible; and they should have a vast deal of St. Paul’s epistles cut out, for they are a tissue of reasoning; and there are multitudes of passages in the Prophets that begin with a regular process of ratiocination and reasoning, that is, laying down premises, and drawing consequences from them; for this is, properly speaking, the operation of reason. But to make that word plainer—for it may not be obvious to many of you, who have not entered into studies of that kind—premises mean some particular point,

some particular subject that is acknowledged to be true, or most probable to be true, in which they are concerned, by which they are affected, and from which certain conclusions may be drawn, agreeably to those premises, or that particular point and subject, in which they declare their intimate concern. I will take it up in this way ; it is an eternal truth, and there are very few on the face of the world who deny it, that there is a God who made the heavens and the earth.

Here is a subject in which the universe of man is concerned, and on which all who have ever had any kind of education—who have ever been taught that they had a mind, or that there is any use to be made of it, agree—that there is a Being infinite and eternal, that made the heavens and the earth ; the author of all beings, because whatsoever exists must exist by some cause or some means. Man is not the cause of his own existence. He sprang from his parents, it is true ; but we must rise up to those who were the first parents, and then we must look into the cause of those first parents. When a poor Greenlander was questioned concerning the knowledge he or his tribe had of a Divine Being,\* he said, “Do not think that we are without some knowledge of that kind, because we find we did not make ourselves ; we know that our parents did not make themselves. It is true, we are told that originally man sprang from the earth. We doubt this ; because, if he sprang from the earth once, why do not men continue to spring from the earth still ? Now, we find no men now springing from the earth ; and we refuse, on this very ground, to suppose they ever did spring from the earth. When we look upon a bird, we find there is a great deal

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\* See a preceding discourse.

of contrivance in that bird ; that bird did not make itself, and man has not made that bird, though he is greater than it. Then this very bird must have come from a Spirit of might, and power, and wisdom, far beyond anything we know ; and when we consider ourselves, we know we are capable of making a boat, which requires a great deal of contrivance and skill ; now man and the bird are infinitely greater than this boat, which it requires all our wisdom and experience to make ; and if that be necessary in reference to a boat, we find ourselves, and the animals, and the birds, and the fishes all so vastly superior to everything of this kind, so that, though some of us can make the boat, we cannot make any of them ; and therefore we are led to consider, that there is a mighty Spirit and mighty power somewhere, that has made us, and these fishes, and these fowls, and these beasts ; by which mighty Spirit we exist, and from whom our fathers, and all who were before them, must have sprung."

This was good reasoning of a poor heathen. We must, then, ourselves, acknowledge there is such a Being. Here are the premises : he is a wise Being—his works prove it ; he is a beneficent Being—his providence demonstrates it : we see the proofs of his wisdom and his providence, in governing the world, in causing grass to grow for the cattle, and corn for the service of man. All men and all angels put together could not make one tuft of grass—could not make one blade or ear of corn. How is it, then, that we have the ears of corn from the grain ? that we have one grain multiplied a thousand times in quantity, and bulk, and mass ? Why it is by a providence and skill that are far beyond anything that we can conceive. Well, this God gave us being—this God provides us with everything that is necessary ; what right, then, has he over us ?

Let us, then, look to the consequences of these premises. That Being must have made us for some end ; he must have had some object in view in so making us. It was not merely that we might get up in the morning, and labour, and return and refresh ourselves with food, and then labour again, and return and refresh ourselves with food ; and, finding that we are exhausted in our spirits and need repose, go to bed, and repeat this for threescore years and ten ; it could not be for this that an infinitely wise Being should have exerted his wisdom and skill, to make us as we are ; and that he should now be superintending the operations of the earth, so as to give a power to the earth to produce grass for the cattle by which we are served, and corn for ourselves, without which we cannot live. He must have made us for some higher end, worthy of his skill, and majesty, and love.

We learn, then, that he has made us for himself ; for an infinitely wise Being and Creator, having no other object in the world—having no other being who could share power or participate infinitude with himself, must have done everything he did in reference to himself ; because there was no being, in the whole compass of eternity, but himself. When he created man, or created angels, it must be in reference to himself, making them dependent on him ; because we learn, from our own state, that in him we live, and move, and breathe, and have our being, and without him we can do nothing. We have no memory, except as that strange thing came from God ; no intellect, but as that strange thing has been furnished by the Almighty ;—we have not produced our own mind ; we have not produced one operation of mind, memory, or understanding ; all these have come from this infinite Spirit. All this, then, shows us that he made us for himself.

Let us again look into these consequences. If he made us for himself, he made us that we might be happy in union with him. He made us that we should do that which is pleasing in his sight, and nothing else. Look at the history he gives of the people with whom he is reasoning. Have they lived to him? And yet, they must acknowledge he made them for himself. Do they live so as to show gratitude to him? No; for they live in disobedience before him, so that he is obliged to complain: "the ox (the stupid ox) knoweth his owner, the ass (the most stupid ass) knows the crib of his master;" but "Israel doth not know." And why do they not know him? "My people do not consider"—they do not reason on the subject—they do not reflect; they acknowledge these wise and holy premises, but they do not reason upon them—they draw no conclusions from them; they are living to themselves, or rather living to the will of him who wills their destruction, and are not living to the praise and honour of God: and, what is still more strange, and more opposed to all the operations of reason, is, that they are living in such a way as is demonstrably ruinous to themselves. Every creature is supposed to have in it a principle of self-preservation, and a regard for self-preservation; therefore, it abhors danger, because that danger may lead to the privation of life; and self-preservation is said to be one of the *first laws* of nature.

Now, take up these premises as a point to be reasoned upon. If self-preservation be a law of nature—if it be the first, that is, its greatest and most impressive law, then that self-preservation ought to influence us so far, that we should not injure ourselves,—that we should not injure that thing which is called *self* or *existence*. It follows, then, that we should take care of this self; but we have not done so—we have sinned against this self. There is not an act of disorderly working in our minds



that does not lead less or more either to a privation of life, or a shortening of life, or rendering life more miserable or burdensome. Now, why should this be the case? "My people do not consider,"—they never reason upon this subject—they do not reflect upon it—they are like the beasts that perish; while they acknowledge all these great principles, they do not draw proper conclusions from them; while they acknowledge him as the author of their being, they do not honour him as their Lord and Master; while they acknowledge his providence, they do not feel the influence that should be drawn from it, viz., that they should glorify him.

In short, we draw from these premises reasons why we should love this God; and as we see all good actions spring from what is called love, everything that is right in the sight of God should spring from love to him. Now, we love nothing but in proportion as we can see its excellence. If we find that it is possible to possess a good thing, we cherish a hearty desire to obtain it; desiring to possess ourselves of it, we labour to acquire it, if the case appear to be possible, and still more would you labour if it appeared to be probable; and you would labour yet more, if it appeared certain, that is, the sure result of well-regulated attention and efforts directed to the point, and eager application of the power we have to its acquirement.

Now, we see, God is the fountain of all goodness. We detest those who have the slightest doubt concerning God being a good Being. Who thinks, for a moment, that he should be unhappy, if he had this God for his portion? Who is not satisfied that he must necessarily be happy, if he has God for his friend—if he has the source of wisdom in a friendly disposition towards himself—the source of power acting on his behalf—and the source of infinite kindness and goodness working together,

in order to produce his present and perfect ultimate happiness? No one doubts that that person is happy who has God for his portion. Now, this God may be our portion: if he is sought, he may be found; if we be importunate at the door of mercy for the blessing we need, that door shall be opened to us. Here are conclusions from these premises. But who asks, that he may receive? Who seeks, notwithstanding the promise of God, that he shall find? Who knocks, notwithstanding the promise of God Almighty, that he will open the door of mercy, and receive his soul—receive him into favour, and preserve him in that favour, and guide him by his counsel, and at last bring him to his glory.

Oh, my dear friends, what have we lost by not reasoning, and what have we lost by not considering? We find God, in one of the minor prophets, thus addressing the people: “Thus saith the Lord—Consider your ways.” Oh, how much have we lost because we have not considered our way! A divine, more than a century ago, Dr. Anthony Horne, wrote a pretty large octavo book, that had for its running title, “The Great Law of Consideration.” He founded it on such premises as these I am using this morning; showing the absolute necessity of our thinking—thinking on God, thinking on ourselves, that is, looking into things and examining them in all points, and in what way we may use them, so as to be exempt from dangers and evils, and so that we may acquire all the good that this beneficent Being has intended for his intelligent creatures. This is a great law to consider; and that divine was certainly much in the right to take up the subject in this way, when it was his object to call men to the exercise of their own faculties, and the powers they had of reasoning and conceiving, and the mode of drawing just conclusions from premises that were not doubted, even by themselves.

Now, the great point comes, this inconsideration is the state of the soul ; and how is it to be redeemed from that evil state ? It is represented here, as being in a state of confirmed unrighteousness, impregnated with sin : “ Though your sins be as scarlet.” The word signifies, *double-stained, double-tinted*. There is a tincture in the soul naturally ; it comes into being with the tincture of sin upon it. But, then, look at the actions of man ! how much they have increased those vile affections in the soul ! how deeply they have stained the whole nature of man ! and those propensities which were at first trivial, comparatively speaking, oh, how terrible they are now, from their indulgence ! The consequence of giving way to crime upon crime, leads to other acts, and those acts produce habits, and those habits are confirmed by continual practice, till the man is at last brought under the power of diabolical habits. Habit we term *second nature* ; and a most diabolical nature that is, in consequence of which we are now suffering much, and will suffer to all eternity, if we are not redeemed from that state.

But it is said, “ Though your sins be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” What can take away their deep stain ? We know that we are in possession of methods of fixing tints, making stains and fixing them ; but we know we can find out no method of discharging these stains. It is very rarely, if not entirely, impossible to take out any tint from any substance, without less or more destroying the fibre, or the texture of the thing, subjected to the process. It is God alone that can discharge the stain of sin from the soul of man ; not only discharge it, but discharge it in such a way that the excellence of the nature of the soul shall appear, in consequence of that discharge ; that the man shall become more of a man—the soul more of a soul, if I may so

express myself, and reason more rationally than it possibly could do, if it were simply discharged of evil, without giving a new nature, and without implanting something instead, to mature and render more excellent the nature from which the sin was discharged.

Again, he says, If they are like crimson, they shall be as wool. If they have the brightest tincture, so that every person shall see that the proper things have been used in order to form that tincture, and that the stain is of a double dye. In scarlet, cochineal is made use of, in order to produce that kind of colour which is peculiar to itself; and a deep and lasting dye is produced, when the proper species is made use of. This is the very thing to which the prophet alludes; he makes use of a term that points out the mode of dying garments. Well, God tells you, by all this, that the state of the sinner can never be so deplorable, but that it is within the reach of mercy; that no soul of man can ever be so deeply stained with sin and transgression, from whose spirit God cannot extract that stain. In a word, their sins, whatever they may be, all manner of sin and blasphemies wherewith men blaspheme, may be forgiven, and the man not only raised at last into the society of the blessed, but with a soul that was once deeply stained with iniquity, as pure and as holy as God made it in the beginning. So that all the transgressions you have committed against God may be pardoned, all the impurities of your souls may be extracted, your evil nature may be taken away—Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith—you may be rooted and grounded in God's love—you may comprehend, with all saints, the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and know the love of God that passeth understanding, and be filled with all the fulness of God. Who could have authority to state this but God himself? I doubt whether the reasoning of an angel or an arch-

angel on this subject, would have ever led him, without authority from God, to suppose that such deep ingrained sin as is found in man, could ever be taken away ; and such deep guilt against the Almighty could ever be taken away, or pardon for those transgressions be ever found out—I doubt whether it would. Indeed, there is more than a doubt, or rather the doubt is confirmed by the saying of God's Spirit himself : “ These things the angels desire to look into.” They find it difficult to comprehend how sinners, such as men are, can have their iniquities blotted out ; and how a nature, so degraded and so deteriorated by the influence of sin, can be preserved and raised up to its primitive excellency : these things they desire to look into. It is a pity *we* do not look into them more ; for we, almost alone, are concerned in them.

Now, what do we draw from all this ? for we must come to a conclusion on this reasoning, that there is no need, first, for the soul to despair of mercy. God hath blotted out all your sins—and why ? Because God, manifest in the flesh, suffered for your offences, and rose again for your justification. Hence, infinite justice can blot out your sins, a sacrifice, infinitely worthy in itself, having been offered up, in order to save your soul and blot out its sin. Again, how is it that a nature so impure as ours can be purified from all unrighteousness ? Why, by the Almighty Spirit. God represents his Spirit as given to them who believe ; and that Spirit is called the Holy Spirit, because his office is to produce holiness in the nature of man. He pervades that nature—purifies, and refines, and sublimates it to himself. He is given, through the blood of the covenant, for this very purpose. He comes to accomplish this great end ; and all those who believe are saved and purified from all things, justified freely, and sanctified wholly. We cannot expect that the deep stain of sin will be taken away by anything

but the power of God ; but the power of God is used in order to effect it. Hence, we are told, that no observance of ours, or any means we can use, can be effectual for this purpose. No, it must be by the power of God ; for God's power alone can counteract, and undo, and destroy what has been produced by the devil and sin. It is by reasoning concerning these things, and looking on the revelation which God, in his mercy, has given us, that we may find there is no room for despair.

I have met with many persons, who, awakened to a sense of their sinfulness, when they have looked at themselves in the light of the Lord, and looked at God in his own splendid holiness and purity, have been filled with despair, and have wished earnestly that they had never been made, and that they had been anything but intelligent beings ; but when the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed to them, and they were assured, from just reasoning, that God was waiting to be gracious unto them, and that Christ had died for them, they were astonished at God's goodness ; and what did they feel ? Admiration for this goodness, and love, beyond anything that can possibly be conceived, to him who had laid down his life to rescue them from the bitter pangs of eternal death.

Let us take some consolation from this. We are in danger from various quarters. I do not remember such a state of general agitation of mind in a nation, as there is at present in ours. We fear disease—we fear trouble—we fear political changes—we fear our foreign enemies—and, in short, we should have, I believe, much more reason to fear, but we find they are almost as much agitated in their minds as we are in ours. It seems a time of general agitation throughout all Europe ; and what will the end be ? The end will be, glory to God in the highest, and on the earth good will, and peace

among men, provided God's eternal word—God's system of salvation, is properly regarded. We have got two prayers added now to the excellent prayers in our book, and these are in reference to the dangers to which we fear we are exposed, praying of God to avert them. I do not know that I have been better pleased with all the prayers that have been made now for half a century, and I have witnessed many new prayers that have been made by our higher orders in the church, for the averting of danger and the procuring of blessings ; but any prayers more judiciously, more piously constructed, in reference to the end, than those very two prayers which you have joined together in offering to God this morning, I have never heard—they are full of significance and full of feeling.\*

Now, it is not in these we can trust, though we may express deep concern by the offering up these prayers. But these prayers direct us to the great God, and they direct us to put away sin, which has been the cause of all we feel as evil, and all that we apprehend as evil ; and if God were to let loose the hand of his power, directed by the Spirit of his law, and his righteousness, and his holiness, there is no reason why any of us should expect to avert any kind of evil. We have time ; thank God ! the destroyer has not come among us yet ; and he may not come, and I trust in God he will not come.

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\* The preceding sermon, preached on the same month, and in the same year with this, has a reference to the Cholera Morbus ; and these two Forms of Prayer were appointed to be read by authority for the staying of the dreadful calamity. Little was the preacher aware, that, in the course of about ten months he would be carried off by that scourge of the human species ! This sermon was preached in Hind Street Chapel, London, Nov. 27, 1831, for the benefit of the Ladies' Lying-in Charity.—EDITOR.

Worthless as we are as a nation, rebellious as we have been as individuals, I have a strong hope that God will not let this scourge of his justice come among us—that we shall only be threatened, as we are, and that we shall turn at the reproof of God, and that God will pour out his Spirit upon us.

Let us return to him ; for my own part, I feel that I have need to return to God, at the head of many a troop who are turning to God. Although we have been first in transgression, we are foremost in religious knowledge, and have the means of grace more abundantly to help us, as a nation, than numbers on the Continent possess. What a mercy, then, my friends, to get this evil that afflicts, or, to use a plain word, scares your consciences, taken away. Instead of that burden that your conscience feels, of wickedness against God, and apprehension of his wrath, to have God witnessing with your spirits that you are the sons of God, instead of those irregular appetites, to have the mind that was in the Lord Jesus, to feel love to God and all mankind—that love that excites to every act that is right in the sight of God, in reference to man, in order to increase his comfort and happiness. Shall we not endeavour to excite to these things ? If, after being convinced, ye be willing to turn to God, lay hold on him—look for mercy—get the deep tincture, as it were, discharged from your souls—get your souls washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb ; ye shall eat the fruit of the land ; God will bless the land, and God will cause everything to come forth in that abundance that the mass of the population requires ; and, perhaps, add something to this—make everything worth its price, and everything that is produced worth the labour which has been spent on it, in order to produce it. Now, in a state of prosperity, that is generally the case ; but it is not the case, exactly, now. Ask God,



then, to pour out his Spirit upon you—be in earnest for your own souls, and be in earnest for the souls of others ; but if ye be disobedient and rebellious, ye shall perish by the sword, and you shall die without knowledge, which is still worse. We might perish by the sword and be saved ; but to die without knowledge—that is, the knowledge of God, we cannot be saved. If we die in our sins, and without the knowledge of God, then we perish for ever. But, you see, against all this, there is such a great probability in our favour, that, notwithstanding the greatness of our sin, there is abundance of pardon ; notwithstanding the deepness of its dye, there is an abundance of influence to discharge the infernal tincture ; so that we may all be purified, and instead of being a congregation of sinners before God, we may become a congregation of saints. This pardon is all possible to that blood which bought our persons ; and this purification is gloriously possible to that almighty energy of his Spirit, by which he can subdue all things unto himself.

It might be supposed, that I should wind up by referring to the object which brought me here to-day, in the conclusion that I have now been drawing ; namely, that as it is our duty to help one another, to do what we can to promote each other's welfare, so we should look particularly into those things that, in the present time, or in reference to some particular exigency, may be that by which we can do one another most good, and by which we may most promote God's glory. Now, I can say—for I have looked into the matter well, that the institution which has been formed among you seventeen years, called the Ladies' Charity, is a very excellent one. It has done a vast deal of good, according to the reports I have received from those who had no interest to deceive me, and could not deceive any, because they delight in truth. I hear now, for instance, that in this year, one

hundred and fourscore poor women, in that state in which nature is most helpless, and needs most care, have been effectually relieved by this institution; and they have been relieved so judiciously, that although £55 was the whole divided among them, it was distributed so successfully, as to afford to each female a kind of efficient relief. That more cases of this kind are constantly calling for relief, you may naturally suppose; but it would be improvident for this charity to give more than the providence of God provides them with. They must be circumscribed—and where? Where it appears that the providence of God circumscribes them—where it appears that the people join in thus circumscribing them, when they give no more; and, therefore, the charity cannot be extended. But, why should this be? Why should a man who gives only to a particular charity, bind himself to a particular sum, when God has enabled him to give more, any more than he should bind himself to a particular sum when, in the course of God's providence, he cannot give so much?

I pleaded for this charity the last time—I may never plead for it again, and possibly shall not; but I would wish to plead to my own satisfaction to-day, and to the benefit of this blessed institution, so that they may not be obliged to come to you so frequently as they have done. It is no pleasing thing for them, and it is no pleasing thing for us to come forward. It is one of those delicate charities which should be just named; and the mention of the charity should excite people to do all they possibly can to support it. Will you do what you can for it this day?

It is a pity there should be any debt on this institution. It is a pity they cannot begin well, with reference to two or three hundred of these poor women, next year. I have read two or three of the cases, and I find these

facts ever present in them—first, that they are wholly destitute of the means of support ; secondly, that they are destitute of the necessities and comforts of life. Now, I will explain myself : in many cases there is no income at all ; that explains one point ; the other is explained thus : that they have not those conveniences of life, such as beds and bedding, on which a woman, in this delicate and helpless state, can be laid, so as to have a chance, humanly speaking, of having her life preserved. Now, it ought to yield great satisfaction to our minds, that God is pleased to make us instruments in bringing poor women of this kind through their dangers and difficulties ; restoring them to society, giving them health and strength to labour again, striving to point out the means by which they may better employ their energies and skill and knowledge, than they have done before ; and, at the same time, pointing them to that holy God who sent you to visit them in their low estate. Give what you can afford this day, in order that they may all have the relief they need, to support them in this trying and delicate state, and to bring them safely through it. Amen.

## SERMON LXI

### THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION.

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PHILIPPIANS III. 3.

“ For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

I HAVE not taken these words to apply them exclusively to ourselves, our own denomination, or to the people I am connected with—I have no design of that sort. Many have spent much time in vindicating themselves and those belonging to them, and in, I had almost said, arrogating to themselves all those characters which they consider belonging to the true church of the Lord Jesus. We should rather try, by God’s word, to find out whatever is essential to our perfection as Christians, what right we have to assume the character, showing an earnest desire and offering up prayers and supplications to God, that we may be found such as we ought to be, and such as God will approve.

At the time when the apostle wrote, there were little else than two professions of religion in the world ; the one of the Gentile world, as it was called—the other of the Jews. The “ Gentiles” literally signifies the nations of the earth that did not come from a Jewish stock ; and the “ Jews,” simply meant those that were descended of the twelve sons of Jacob. To the Gentiles no revelation

from God had been vouchsafed ; it was just then beginning to dawn. They had gods many and lords many ; and there were certainly multitudes who worshipped these lords and gods with great fervency, and at very great expense. The Jewish people, however, had a revelation from God, sufficient to instruct them in their duty, and to show them what God, in his infinite mercy, had provided for them, to make them what they should be, a wise, holy, happy, and useful people. They had a book to look into, in order to instruct them in the being and will of God ; but the Gentiles had no such book : they had traditions and testimonies respecting those great men, that they had formed into gods ; and they deified the attributes of invisible beings. Hence, as attributes of an infinite Spirit were endless, their gods were also endless. From the gross conceptions which they formed of these, they thought it right to make images of those beings to which they ascribed these attributes ; and hence there were gods of stone, and wood, and various kinds of metal, which they worshipped with a considerable portion of fervour ; that, however, was generally in proportion to what they expected from the attribute, and to the excellence of the workmanship of the image. We see here a convincing argument for the necessity to man of the knowledge of the being and attributes of the true God ; for they were not wise, they were not holy, they were not happy, they were not useful. And hence we may see, that the various ages of the Gentile world were spent in mere fightings and plunderings, devastation, and misery.

But the law which God gave to Moses for the Jews was a holy law, a law commanding holiness—revealing a holy God, not only in some of his attributes, but in all that it is essential for man to know and consider in order to see what reason there is for him, so called upon, to put

his trust in that God. There was a providence, also, that peculiarly marked the people that walked as they were commanded, as a testimony of their acceptance; and there were so many miraculous interferences of an unseen power, both in the way of judgment and mercy, that it was impossible for the people to consider what was before them, without seeing that the author and subject of this revelation was one that knew all things, and could do all things; and that those who worshipped him according to his will, would be signally blest. They were to be distinguished from all others by a rite—circumcision, which was given to them when entering into covenant with God. Now, that covenant which we hear so much about, was that sort of thing that was made between God and men—those to whom he made his revelation; and it was very simple: “I will be thy God; we will be thy people.” As I have made thee for myself, to show forth my praise, so thou shouldst live to me, and show forth my praise; and then the covenanting party all said, as it were, Amen. God then took those persons into his particular care, and they put themselves constantly under that care, trusting in nothing else. This was the simple covenant from the beginning, “I take you for my people; we take thee for our God; we will have no other gods before thee; shall put nothing in thy place, and expect happiness from thee only; we put ourselves under thy direction, and look for teaching and wisdom solely from thyself; place ourselves in the hands of thy mercy, expecting the manifestations towards us of thy compassion and fatherly care.”

Now all this was very natural; and every one that carried about with them this mark, through all successive generations, were thereby reminded that they had put themselves under the care and protection of God, that they took him for their own God—and that they had

nothing to do with idolatry nor with anything connected with it. Hence the people were called “the Circumcision,” to distinguish them from all other kinds of people ; to point out to them the necessity of holiness ; that as they worshipped a God who was holy, they should be holy also. But they were soon taught, by farther revelations, that they could do nothing without his strength : that they were guilty, and could do nothing without his teaching ; that they were sinful, and could not save themselves from punishment. Then the whole of that system, which is called the ritual law of Moses, was given to them, pointing out to them that every sin against this pure and holy God, to whom they owed their lives, was a forfeiture of those lives, and that it was necessary, in order to redeem them, that a life should be forfeited for them ; and then every individual that brought a sacrifice before God, as the life-blood was poured out, acknowledged, before God, that he deserved the death which the substituted animal bore. But it was soon discovered, even then, that “it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin ;” should purify the soul, make an atonement for moral evil, and enable the soul to love and serve God with all its powers ; and hence they saw, through that—God’s Spirit helping them, and his prophets intimating this more largely—that there was some one grand personage who was to become a great and important sacrifice ; who was to bear the sins of the people, as it were, in his own body, and make an atonement by his sufferings and death. In the fulness of time, you know, this person was revealed to them ; he took upon him the nature of man, and was “God manifest in the flesh.” A wonderful mystery ; but all explained when we come to the ancient love of God towards mankind, and the nature of sin, which required such a sacrifice as it was not in the power of men or

angels to offer. God had provided this incarnation of his Son, Jesus Christ, as a sufficient sacrifice, and atonement, and satisfaction, and offering for the sins of the whole world.

God was beginning to open this to the Gentiles, to bring them from their idolatries to the true God ; and to his people, the Jews, to call them from trusting in their sacrifices, or in any of the works of the law, performed for the justification of their souls from the guilt of sin, and the purification of their hearts from its pollution. Every person who received this was considered to have the law fulfilled in him in the most spiritual and effectual manner ; and all those who came to God through Christ crucified, to receive remission of sins, were considered as the people who had the spiritual end and design of the law fulfilled ; for the law was only a shadow of good things to come—was considered in itself as a system of imperfections, and had immediate respect to Christ. Hence the apostle, speaking on this subject, says, “ We ” —Christians, we who have received the doctrine of Christ crucified ; Christ dying for the sins of the world, and raised again for the justification of man—“ We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

Here we see, my brethren, what that Christian system which we profess, requires : that we should be brought to God, redeemed from our sin and unrighteousness, by the means that he himself has devised and employed—that we should be saved from the evil that is in the world and in our nature, and have cause to exult in God’s mercy through Him that was crucified for us. “ We are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”



The first thing that will strike you here is, the object of worship, which the apostle sets before the people, and with whom he gives them to understand, the Christians held communion. "We worship God," says he, "in the Spirit," or through the Spirit. Mark, then, that religion is nothing without an object of worship ; and that that religion is good for nothing, the object of the worship of which is not an infinite and eternal Being ; for as worship signifies the acknowledging the infiniteness, and holiness, and goodness of the object of worship, the man that worships anything less than infinite, eternal excellence, worships that which is less than himself ; because, if he can comprehend the Being who is the object of his worship, that Being must evidently be less than his own mind, for his mind comprehends it. But every wise man must see that, to be a proper object of worship, the Being must be infinite and incomprehensible ; and this is one reason why that Being who made and sustains all things should be the object of all the worship of all intelligent beings. He is infinitely great, he is infinitely good ; he is infinitely wise and holy, and he is infinitely merciful.

What is the idea that we generally form of God ? Why, that he is a sufficient good ; that he is all we need to defend us, all that we need to instruct us, all that we need to make us wise—all that we need to make us holy, happy, and to save us unto eternal life. We cannot attempt to worship any angel, or any creature ; to worship any being that cannot satisfy or defend us sufficiently by his power, make us happy by the communications of his holy nature ; in short, teach us every thing that our ignorant nature cannot know but by his revelation, or by the influence of his wise Spirit in our minds.

Who then, my friends, is your God ? Why, that

Being who made the heavens and the earth. What do you expect from him? You expect everything that is wise, and holy, and good. Who is this God that made the world? The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the author of this Bible, the author of this new covenant, the dispenser of all the blessings we possess, and of all the good we have in anticipation. Now if we carried these views continually along with us, how much more happy should we be? We should feel more confidence in the Object of our worship. Before every act of religious worship, we should accustom our minds to dwell upon the infinite goodness and holiness and sufficiency of the Object of our adoration and homage. Who can show these perfections to the mind when there is a thick veil of darkness that envelopes the heart, and prevents the light that is in this word from shining into the soul? The windows of this chapel are very well constructed to admit a sufficiency of light to enable us to read this book, and to discover the different objects that surround us; but suppose these windows were shut up, in vain would the sun shine, in vain would our eyes endeavour to behold the surrounding objects. We could not see them because the light of heaven was obstructed; it did not enter, it was of no use to us, although the sun was shining without the intervention of a cloud, even at noon-day. Do you not see, then, that if the heart of man is covered with a veil—if there is anything that beclouds it, and prevents the light of this word from entering in, in vain is this word and the Spirit that gave the inspiration from which it came, and in vain are all the testimonies of God's power in the world, because the man cannot see them, because, although all is light around, yet all is darkness within?

How many read this book, and do not understand it! who say it is hard to be understood! That reason, how-

ever, I deny ; it is not difficult to comprehend anything requisite to our salvation, that is recorded in this book. Have you never known the instance of a wicked, swearing, lying, drunken man, coming under the preaching of the gospel, the doctrine of Christ crucified ; by the influence of God's Spirit, become suddenly alarmed, hardly knowing at first what was the matter ? He soon begins to feel that he is a sinner, and that he is in danger of falling into hell ; he takes up this book, and he begins to read in it passages, perhaps, that he had read before often, from which, however, he derived no kind of instruction ; but now he sees everything clearly, he understands all that makes for his peace ; his eyes are opened, the darkness of ignorance is not merely pierced, but it is taken away by the powerful illumination of God's Spirit, that gives him to feel that he is a sinner ; and having opened his eyes, causes him to behold wondrous things in the law of his gospel.

This God then, who is the object of the Christian's worship, is a God of light—an instructing Spirit ; he gives understanding to the simple, he enlightens the eyes of the blind ; so that whatever darkness you complain of, if you cry to God, approach his throne, and beseech him to send forth the Spirit of light into your hearts ; God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not, will give it unto you. However great your ignorance, and however great your weakness, God will take them away, and you will see, your eyes being opened, the wonders of his law, and the greater mysteries that his gospel contains.

But then God, who is a wise Being, and can teach you, is also a powerful Being to defend you. Look within you : you feel the workings of various disorderly passions—you cannot stand against their operations. What are you to do ? In vain you hear words and ser-

mons against them ; these are all well in their places, but they cannot take away the evil, nor defend you against it. This word, however, describes the power of the Object of your adoration ; and from the known goodness of that divine Being, you find that that power will be employed to protect you from every evil influence ; and whatever notions we form of the power of sin, or the world, or the devil, we know that the power of God is unlimited, and that it will be exerted in protecting us here, and saving us unto eternal life.

But then, who can pardon sin but God ? and what God can pardon sin ? Only the true God. He can and he will blot out your sin, because a complete sacrifice has been offered to atone for it, because Christ has died for our sins, and risen again for our justification. Thus you go, with your sense of guilt, to the throne of God ; and, addressing his mercy, you say, “ Father, I have sinned, but thou art a merciful God ; I am ignorant, but thou canst teach me, for thou art all-wise ; I am weak, but thou canst strengthen me, for thou art almighty ; I have not only sinned, and am weak and ignorant, but I am guilty before thee, but thou canst blot out my sins, thou canst take away my guilt ; and I draw near to thee through him to whom thou hast directed my eyes and attention ; I come to thee in the name of Christ, with whom thou art well pleased, and for his sake I implore thee to be merciful to me.” And then God listens to your application ; and as he gave you light from his own infinite wisdom, protection from his own infinite power and goodness, so he gives you mercy from his own infinite mercy ; and thus you find, in the God you worship, all that you need to make you wise, and holy, and happy.

I suppose that there is scarcely one who hears me that would not consider himself the happiest of mortals, if

he could but know that God has forgiven him his sins. What is the heaviest burden we endure ? What causes our fear of death ? It is the guilt of sin. What makes us enjoy so little the good things of life that the providence of God gives us ? Why the cause of our wretchedness and guiltiness, the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death. We cannot look far forward, since this life is forfeited, because of sin. But let a man know that God, for Christ's sake, has blotted out his sins ; let him feel this by the Spirit of God witnessing with his Spirit that he is the child of the Most High God, and will not that man be happy ? Yes, ineffably happy.

You have thought perhaps that you are a genuine Christian, while you have not got this. Well, do not be discouraged ; you are seeking it. He that has got this testimony now in his bosom, sought it earnestly, and because he sought it earnestly and in the right way, God gave it to him. And ye also shall find it if ye seek it earnestly, and in the right way ; depend upon it God will not refuse the testimony of his Spirit—and God's Spirit will witness with yours that you are a child of the Most High.

You are not to give up because you are not the true circumcision now ; you might have been in this state long ago ; it is your fault and your folly that you are not. But thank God, this is still the time of grace—this is still the day of salvation ; and while we have the testimony of God concerning his Son, we ought to make application to God for the blessings that we need.

We learn from what the apostle says, that we ought to consider this God a Spirit. What is matter has form and place ; and that which has form and place is always limited ; but a Spirit, such as God, is unlimited ; hence his power is without bounds, his wisdom is without bounds, his mercy is without bounds, his

goodness and his truth are without bounds. Thus we distinguish him from everything else, because all things are bounded and limited—all except this eternal, infinite God, the object of our worship. Therefore, because he is limited, he cannot be hindered in his operations. The power which has nothing greater than it, nothing beyond it, cannot be encumbered so as not to be able to exert itself. Finite power may be limited and prevented from action ; for all power, but the sovereign power of God, may be either suspended in its operation, or weakened, or destroyed, so as to be capable of doing nothing at all. But God's power is unlimited ; and hence we see in God a Spirit that is unlimitably powerful, unlimitably wise, unlimitably merciful, unlimitably good in every sense you can possibly conceive. What a fountain of mercy, what a fountain of wisdom, what a fountain of goodness ! All that can make you good, God can impart ; and hence this very word "God," among our ancestors, from whom we have received it, signifies not only an Infinite Being, but good, or goodness ; for such is the nature of God, it has all good in it ; it produces no evil, but supplies, from its own inexhaustible fountain, all that man can possibly receive, filling and satisfying his largest capabilities for enjoying good.

Now, says the apostle, "We are the circumcision ;" we who have not only the mark of Christianity, who not only gave up ourselves to God, being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and having made a public profession, we, who are no longer Jews, trusting in their works and sacrifices—no longer Gentiles, trusting in their lords many, and gods many, but we belong to that Being whose name is called upon by us, and into whose covenant we have entered. But we are not satisfied with our outward

privileges or professions, howsoever sincere and howsoever enlightened they may be ; we look to the thing itself, and worship HIM who is a SPIRIT, in spirit and in truth. His own Spirit directeth us in this worship ; our hearts are engaged, our understanding is in it ; and God's Spirit helpeth all our infirmities, so that we can intelligently and acceptably worship him, "rejoicing in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh."

It was usual, my brethren, for the Jews to exult in their privileges. The word which we here translate *rejoice*, signifies to glory, or exult, or make much of ourselves, in consequence of having much good or wisdom, or something of that sort. Now, says the apostle, we rejoice, we exult in Christ Jesus. A Jew might exult in his offering of lambs and rams, in having gone through all his ablutions, in having offered up all his sacrifices, and kept all his feasts and ceremonies ; but there he rested, he went no farther ; for there were but very few of them that for a long time saw through their rites and sacrifices to him that was signified. Even the prophets, we are told, searched diligently what and what manner of time the Spirit which was in them did signify, when they testified of Jesus Christ. And it was given to them to know, that not for themselves, not for that dispensation, but for us, for the Christian dispensation, these things were preached among them by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. These, then, exulted in being the people, that God had selected for the objects of his mercy, and to whom he was to send his Son in the flesh.

But why do we talk so much about Christ Jesus ? It is because we have received so much from him ; because we have received so much through him, and expect our all from him. Why then should we not exult in Christ Jesus, Christ the anointed, Jesus the Saviour ? We have

received the unction of the Divine Spirit from and through him ; we have received salvation by him. It is no wonder that we should talk of that infinitely holy God, who has made such provision for the souls of mankind, who has looked upon us with so merciful an eye, and provided for us all that we need. Is there anything that you find in God, that you may not expect to be communicated to you, if necessary to your salvation ? No ; and why ? Because Jesus Christ has died to purchase these blessings for you, and God has them ready to communicate to all who, through his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, call upon him for salvation. “Blessed, then, surely, are the people who are in such a case ; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord !” You may say, perhaps, that you have not been believing as you should have done ; that you have not been glorifying God as you should have done ; that you have not expected so much from Christ as you might have received before this, and as you may now receive. Let us then take encouragement from our God and from his Christ, from the way of salvation which he has revealed, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

There are certain national privileges on which men value themselves ; and I believe it is innocent in some cases to do so. A Briton, for example, may value himself on account of the constitution of his country ; because it is found by the wisest men to be the wisest and best system that has ever existed for the civil government of men. He may value himself also on account of his king, and very justly too, as “the father of his people.” And I am wondrously deceived if we have not now such a king. I own that I consider it an honour that I am a subject of WILLIAM THE FOURTH, and of the British constitution. I glory in it, and value



myself on account of it. I consider these great blessings from God ; and while I rejoice in possession of them, I magnify God, who is the Author of them. But what are all these in comparison of the constitution of this gospel ; the good news which calls upon all the lost and undone children of men to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they shall not perish, but have everlasting life ? Is there any gospel like this gospel ? is there any system of truth like this ? anything to give encouragement like this ? And should you not rejoice in God as your King ? What condescension, that the great God of heaven should manifest himself, not only as a *prophet* to teach man—not only as a *priest*, to make atonement for men—but as a *king*, to reign over them and in them, to defend and preserve them, and to bring them unto eternal life at last, the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, prepared for their eternal kingdom. What a privilege is this ! How happy are they who enjoy it ! Blessed be God, who has called us to this, through Jesus Christ our Lord !

“Having no confidence in the flesh.” We do not look to our own wisdom to lead us, we look to God for guidance ; we do not trust to our own power for protection against our enemies, no ; but we look for power from our God on high to overcome them ; not only to overcome them, but to enable us to receive good, and to retain it when we have received it ; for it requires the power and mercy of God to give us good, and to keep us in the possession of it after we have attained it. It is easy to see how a man can have no confidence in himself. He often trusted in himself, but every time he so trusted it was a proof of his folly ; and he found the more he trusted to his own strength, wisdom, or other qualifications that men generally boast of, the less he got by it. But when he looks to his Creator providing all things for him, the author

of his being, the preserver of his life, and the dispenser of all his blessings through Christ who died for him, he learns easily to undervalue himself, and to "rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh."

Well, I trust I can now say of you, my friends, "Ye are the circumcision that worship God in the Spirit, that exult in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Suppose you have not been such before this, let us begin to be so this very hour. Can we not say we desire to worship God,—we see the reasonableness, we feel the necessity of it? Is there any of us that will not say, I exult in Christ Jesus as the atoning sacrifice through which I can come to the throne of justice for the remission of my sins? Is there any who would not put himself under the teaching of such a Prophet,—under the atoning influence of such a Priest,—under the government of such a King? You do not believe you can save yourselves; you do not believe that you can, by any good work, merit salvation, because you cannot work without the power of God; and what has been wrought by God's power, HE alone has the merit of,—not *man*. In the same way as you cannot purchase the goods of a merchant, by giving him, in exchange, other goods of his own.

There is no reason why God should not save you now. Go, then, to his throne, exulting in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh; you owe to him all your holy desires, resolutions, and powers. May he quicken and save you, bring you into a state of salvation, keep you in that state of salvation, and make you happy in himself! So far, then, ye are the circumcision. Would any of you go away from this place wishing to hold another creed? You may desire to add this article, and the other, to it. Well, then, remember all other matters are of comparatively small moment to what justifies, to

what sanctifies you, protects you in the way of holiness, has recommended you to God's mercy, and is qualifying you for the kingdom of heaven. All this is included in what the apostle describes in the text. And this is what you are called to profess, and to profess in such a manner as, by God's Spirit witnessing with yours, you may know you have not believed in vain.

Would you not be glad, my friends, that this gospel were preached in every part of the world? Would you not be glad that your near relations and acquaintances, and all in your neighbourhood, were made truly acquainted with it? You say, Yes; and you pray frequently that God may enlighten them, and bring them from error to truth, and from the bondage of sin and Satan into the liberty of the children of God. Does it not please you that these things are preached publicly, and that multitudes, in different places, are thus taught to worship God in the spirit, to exult in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh?

Perhaps you are all acquainted with the history of this place.\* A few good men, loving God, his Son Jesus Christ, and the souls of men, came forward with substance to raise the Chapel. They took upon their shoulders a heavy expense. I am sorry that you cannot, being a poor people, bear the expense of keeping the house on its foundation safe and comfortable, and pay the interest of the money that has been borrowed on the faith and responsibility of these men; so that they find themselves, in place of being able to liquidate the principal, falling short, in the legal interest, about forty pounds a year.

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\* Westminster Wesleyan Chapel. The sermon was preached, and a collection made on the behalf of the Trust, March 4, 1832.

—EDITOR.

Some of you are very poor, and poverty and want have tongue-tied you, so that you cannot plead your own cause ; and therefore I call upon those men and women who have this world's good to spare, to come forward and help you. And then you poor people, who have the word of God preached to you in this place, I hope you will do something too. I do not ask you to give the money which you owe to your landlord, or which may be necessary to provide for your daily wants ; but if you can spare anything, however small, God will notice your gift, and love you for your deed.

## SERMON LXII.

### THE GOSPEL A PROCLAMATION OF LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

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JOHN V. 25.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live.”

WE all acknowledge that this is the day which the Lord hath made, for his followers to be glad and rejoice in him ; and we acknowledge that providence and mercy that has favoured us with this opportunity, and given us hearts, and minds, and purposes to benefit by it ; and we have come here this morning to worship the great and holy God. We acknowledge that this is our reasonable service ; and, as reasonable beings, we are determined, God being our helper, to worship him in spirit and in truth, according to his own commandment. But we need his assistance ; and our hearts must be lifted up in fervent prayer to him, that we may receive the communications of that strength from on high.

There are some maxims which belong to this part of the subject which are, I think, universally credited by all those whose hearts are truly devoted to God according to the Christian faith ; and these maxims, which I shall just mention, have acquired very great power by

being considered as perfectly true, as essentially necessary for the worshippers of the Most High, and for those who wish to profit by religious knowledge. The first is, that in the Christian scheme, the word of God is calculated to make us wise unto salvation through the acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. A second maxim is, that every portion of God's word to be profitable to the hearers or readers, should be received under a measure of that inspiration by which that word was originally given. There is a third maxim, not less important than either of the preceding, that *that* which is called the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, has for its proper ground and reason the fallen state of man ; and a fourth maxim is, that the gospel has but one nature, one object and end, and that is, to bring, by its direction, all those that believe it, to the enjoyment of all those privileges and all that excellence from which they had fallen.

The first of these needs no discussion by way of argument ; for when you take up this book, you receive counsels of wisdom from it ; it has come to us by the authority of him who spake as never man spake ; and you acknowledge that this word, on its evidence, should be credited ; you have heard of the wonders that have been wrought on behalf of those that have received it in this way, and you doubt not, if you properly regard it, that you also shall be made wise unto salvation, through the acknowledgment of the truth that is in Christ. With respect to the second, I think there is no need either of discussion by way of argument. Can we suppose that that word, conceived in the Divine mind, and given from God to man as a discovery of his will, can be read or heard properly, without being considered as coming from God with authority ? And if we credit that assertion fully, we shall find that it is necessary to

have the mind under the same kind of inspiration, under a measure of the same influence of that Spirit by which it was originally given, in order that we may properly comprehend it, that we may feel and acknowledge its excellence, and have our minds borne to that end which it has in view in being spoken to us.

And now, when we are upon this point, a portion having been read out of the gospel, a quotation of the sublime words of him "who spake as never man spake," we must acknowledge that this gospel is founded in its reason, and has, as its only ground, the necessities of man. And there is a manifestation of God's wisdom in giving this gospel, and there is a manifestation of his eternal love in appointing to man such a Saviour as that pointed out to us in this word. "Such a High Priest," says the apostle, "became us who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." That such a display of God's wisdom, of his power, and of his goodness should have been made to man, is certainly a subject of admiration, and cause of gratitude and adoration, to every person who feels himself interested in it. Such a Saviour ! And what does this word say of that Saviour ? We read of him, and we credit what we read, that "in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ;" that eternal word of the eternal God that came among men, and was manifested in the flesh, revealed God to man in such a manner as he had not been revealed before ; though wondrously manifested by the ancient prophets, yet there were attributes in the divine mind that Jesus Christ illustrated and explained, and applied in such a way as those most heavenly men had never been allowed to do ; and hence it could, with the utmost truth be said, that while "no man had seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

There must, then, my friends, have been something in the state and condition of man that was a sufficient reason to the great God to manifest himself in this way. And what could that be which required such a manifestation—a manifestation of infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness? God, we know, from the perfection of his nature, never does anything that is not proper, that is not useful, that is not necessary. Hence, if we consider the gospel as his gift, and the glorious Personage of whom it speaks as the gift of his infinite love, we are led to conclude—for reason bears us out here—that it must have been a proper thing to make such a manifestation; that it must have been a useful thing—that it must have been a necessary thing; for God does nothing without adequate cause, and never makes a manifestation of his infinite power or wisdom, or any of his other attributes needlessly, or to show merely that he possesses them. We shall find, that in all the displays of his attributes, he has in view the necessity, the happiness, and the perfection of man; and hence he manifests himself in such a manner, as that men may apprehend, receive, and walk in him—live to his glory here, and live with him to eternity.

In what state, then, let us inquire, is man, in order to vindicate this manifestation of God to the world? He is, in his moral state, ignorant; he is careless, he is weak, and he is, at the same time, evil; bear that in view. Had he not been ignorant, and ignorant of those things which are suited to his best interests, he had not had this revelation of infinite wisdom; it would not have been necessary had man possessed that knowledge which is essential to his perfection and happiness. The revelation of God, then, to man, was absolutely necessary; it was absolutely necessary to the Jews, or the Law had never been given them; it was absolutely necessary to



the Gentiles, else apostles and evangelists had never been inspired by God to proclaim what are called the glad tidings of the gospel of Jesus Christ to mankind. Now, my friends, look at the state of the human race ! I see man—certainly the greatest, the most wondrous being on this side the throne of God—I can conceive none higher in his powers—none, if I take the account God himself has given of the creation, none in a nearer approach to the infinite perfections of the divine nature, than man. Mark it, then, Jews and Gentiles ; it is said in this sacred book, that “God made man in his own image and in his own likeness.” It is not said of Gabriel or Michael, who from his name is one that is LIKE GOD, that they were made in God’s likeness ; “they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation ;” but it is not said of one of these heavenly beings, even the highest of them, that God made them in his own image, and in his own likeness ; that alone is spoken of man. But when we come to look at his state now, we shall find that he is little better than a glorious ruin of his former self. We do not see those perfections that necessarily must have entered into the constitution of the divine image—we do not see those clear apprehensions of an infinitely Holy Spirit requiring a holy worship—we do not see this human being capable of discerning him, discerning the reasons why he should worship him, discerning at the same time those motives that should lead him to that worship, and feeling that power by which he could worship an infinite Spirit in spirit and in truth.

What then does this imply ? Why, that the Mosaic account of the fall of man must be true. And however people may argue against what is called the doctrine of original sin and the fall of man, we have a fearful proof, in the character and conduct of every human being, that

man, who was made in the image of God, has fallen from it. He has become ignorant, dark in his intellect, feeble in his mental powers—their energies are excessively perverted, and he is evil in his nature. With immense faculties, he finds that he is incapable of doing the things which are required by the command and authority of the Most High. He is a fallen spirit, and it requires the superaddition of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and everything that is spoken in that gospel, to bring him out of his fall into that state of happiness and excellence in which God created him. It was for this very purpose that the author of this text was manifested in the flesh; for this very purpose he taught as never man taught, wrought miracles the most incontestable that were ever exhibited to the world, died for our offences, rose again for our justification, and according to this inviolable word, ever lives at the right hand of God to make intercession for man. It became, then, God's wisdom to manifest Jesus Christ, to teach man, as the great prophet, the whole will of God. And we find that this is what the gospel, the word of the Son of God, is made the instrument of, wheresoever it is preached—among the Gentiles, in the farthest parts of the world, even among those who, by a long continuance in darkness, superstition, and evil, have become wholly ignorant, like the beasts that perish—when the gospel is preached, it becomes “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” as the purpose and declaration of it, in the beginning, intimates, that it was to be “the glory of God's people Israel.”

To bring man, then, out of this state of darkness, God manifested his wisdom and goodness in sending his SON. But look at the moral state of man, with respect to strength, and you will find that he has little energy. He hath powers to form purposes, because there is light granted to the mind to discover to it his interest, his

duty, and the danger to which he is exposed ; but there is not—I state it to the bosom of every one before me, and if my voice could reach to the end of the world, it would speak it without at all attempting to soften the expression—there is not in man power to do that which God shows him to be right. He sees what is evil ; he knows it should be avoided, and that it will be destructive and ruinous if persevered in ; but he cannot avoid it, unless he receives help from on high : he is powerless, my friends, morally powerless. He sees what is excellent, and approves of it ; “but how to perform that which is good, he finds not ;” unless he receives power from above. Try, then, your hearts before God, and you will all say, Yes, we need the help of God, and without that we can do nothing.

Again : have we not found that there is a law which must necessarily have been imposed upon us by our Creator, as his intelligent offspring ? Do we not find it in these words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and mind ?” Does not that imply, that every power, the whole energy of mind, shall be put forth, not only in thinking rightly respecting God, but in regarding him as the Supreme Good, adoring him as the Fountain of being, and of all our blessings, and in doing that which we know, from the perfection of his nature, must be righteous in his sight, and avoiding that which we know, from the perfection of his nature, must be opposed to his will, because opposed to that nature ? We have all sinned, and come short of God’s glory ; and who shall rescue us from this state ? “Oh, wretched man !” says a Jew, who had embraced the Christian faith, when he considered this subject, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?” While he is deploring his state, he has a gleam of God’s infi-

nite mercy through Christ Jesus; and then cries out, with a measure of rapture, that suddenly succeeded the influence of almost despair upon his mind, "I thank God, through Christ Jesus my Lord!" It was to accomplish, then, this great purpose, to teach man what he knew not, to give him the strength that he found not, to redeem him from the evil that was sinking him deeper and deeper into mental and other misery, and into the bitter pains of eternal death, that God gave to the world Him who is called the light and life of the world.

We find, too, that God did what was useful to be done. He fulfilled his counsels; for he made man to be happy in time and in eternity, that man might love him with all his powers, and that men might love each other as brethren, with pure hearts fervently. And it was suitable to the perfection of God's loving nature, to provide a way of bringing men into that state of perfection and bliss from which they had fallen. It was useful that man, made in the image of God, and in a kind of consociation with all human beings, should be such as should be useful to his fellows; not to live in that state of perpetual warfare, and contention, and infliction of cruelty in which we find multitudes of the sons of men; and therefore it was useful to redeem them from this state, and keep them in a state of comfortable union with themselves; for without this, what is man? Considering him in the most innocent point of view, he is a useless incumbrance on the face of the world; and taking him as he actually is, he is a fearful and almost unlimited substantial incumbent curse upon the earth. Now the design of God was to redeem men from this state; to bring the nations of the earth under the influence of love to God, and love to men; to call home the children of the one great family, to feel them-

selves as the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, who is the Father of the Spirits of all flesh, that they might not hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain ; that they might acknowledge his being, and receive his blessings, who is the fountain of everlasting good, and the unceasing, eternal spring of benevolence to the human race.

We are far, we may say, from this state, but we are not without hope. Much progress has been made in the advancement of the light of life in the nations of the earth. If I might use a foreign expression, there is a continual progressing here ; and there is more and more of that benevolence that comes from God, extending itself among the sons of men. Few in this chapel have lived so long as the preacher who now addresses you ; few here know the nation as well as your preacher ; he has been travelling in it now for more than half a century, in all places, among all states, and among all conditions of men, from some of the highest places in the earth, to some of the lowest dwellings of men ; and he now says—grey hairs have a right to speak, when associated with much opportunity of observation—there is such a change in the country,\* as, even at the time when his mind was expanded with the greatest expectations of the manifestations of God's glory in the conversion of men, he never anticipated. I speak it without offence ; there is a wonderful regeneration in the minds of men throughout the whole of this land ; and I know it is not confined to the whole of this land. No : I take up that word which was spoken prophetically two hundred years ago :

“ Religion stands on tip-toe in this land,  
Ready to depart for th' American strand.”

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\* This subject is adverted to in preceding sermons.—EDITOR.

It did depart; but it did not leave this nation without its influence. The holy man who used the words never intended to say so; and when the licenser was applied to, he said, "Mr. Herbert is a holy man of God; I take him not to be a prophet, but I will license the book because of its general tendency, because of its amazing excellence of sentiment, and the stream of piety that runs through it." And now we find America a Christian country.

However, it was in consequence of the degraded, fallen state of man, that Jesus Christ—who speaks of man in his fall as in a state of death, of moral death—represents himself as coming to relieve him; and hence, in the text, proclaiming the truth from heaven, he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." These words are spoken with authority: it becomes God absolutely to assert, because he can never be mistaken, and can neither deceive nor be deceived. Hence he seldom condescends to reason with men. God should be believed on his own declaration; this book is of God; and an implicit faith in this testimony is rational in man: there is infinite reason why it should be so. As those who take this book as a revelation from God, we should take every word that is contained in it as a truth on which we should not wait to reason, in order to persuade ourselves of its truth; because, acknowledging that it is a Divine revelation, we should at once receive all its announcements as the essential and immutable truth of God, who cannot lie.

But what does our Lord mean when he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live"? He speaks of *life*, and

he speaks of *death* ; two subjects in which all human beings are so intimately concerned. We know that he raised the dead ; there were the fullest proofs of it ; and he raised them by a power, not delegated, not borrowed, not kindly conceded by the Author of life for the occasion ; for the raising of the dead, as well as the creation of the world, is, properly speaking, a work of the Almighty God—a work that can be performed only by omnipotence ; and omnipotence can never be lent or delegated. It is impossible for any but the living God, the great Jehovah, to delegate his omnipotence to any one ; for there can be but one omnipotence ; and that omnipotence which is delegated to another, ceases to be the omnipotence of him who delegated it. In truth, we cannot speak at all of delegated omnipotence. If we find one manifested, who is like unto ourselves,—no matter how nearly he approaches us, our moral imperfections being excepted, if he can raise the dead, and say, “Lazarus, come forth !” so that he who was dead and bound with his grave-clothes, comes forth at his bidding,—then there is the omnipotence of God—omnipotence not borrowed, not delegated ; for then there would be two omnipotences, and the original omnipotence annihilated, as it were, by the other.

Man, we have said, is considered in a state of moral death, and in condemnation in consequence of it. There is a word which is used upon this subject in the New Testament, which deserves here our especial attention : “He hath *concluded* all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all.” The word signifies that kind of concluding, shutting or locking up, which takes place in reference to persons who have been tried for their lives, found guilty, condemned, brought back to prison, and shut up there till the time appointed for the execution upon them of the sentence of the law. So, God has

“concluded all under sin,” and with this merciful design, “that he might have mercy upon all,”—that he might rescue all from the punishment to which they were exposed. And it was right that men should be tried; that they should be tried by the moral law; that law which extends to all the actions of life, and to all the motives of these actions, that God’s righteousness and holiness might appear; that his justice might appear not only to be justice—a stern thing, that would not bend, that would not remit or pardon—but to show that God had a right to require what he did require from man, and that man, not having rendered it, was condemnable before his Maker; and having rebelled against the authority of the Most High, deserved the punishment which the law sanctioned.

We know that the proper punishment of sin is death. Look at the whole spirit of the Mosaic law—look at the spirit of the gospel—look, wherever the principles of law and justice are found to prevail, and you will find that man is permitted to live, to exercise his various functions, and carry on his business, in consequence of being obedient to the law; and that the man who sins against the law forfeits its protection, and his life with it. This was literally true under the Mosaic law. The individual who, by one single act or crime, transgressed it, forfeited his life; and hence we perceive the force of those solemn denunciations, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;” “The soul that sinneth, it shall die;” because the individual forfeits the life which he held on the condition of fidelity and obedience to his Maker. Man, then, is considered as dead in law, a phrase which I dare say I need not explain to some of my congregation. The man who is dead in law has been found guilty of a capital crime, and sentenced to death; and we know that in that case he can do no



legal act. He cannot bequeath any property whatever to his wife or children, his relations, the nearest or dearest he ever had ; he is incapable of any kind of legal act—he is dead in law. Now with this meaning attached to it, the word is used by the apostle himself, “ And you hath he quickened ”—made alive, “ who were dead in trespasses and sins ”—sentenced by the law to die ; dead, morally, spiritually dead in your souls ; having sinned against God and forfeited your life, and being exposed to the bitter pains of eternal death. Now Jesus tells us, that the hour was coming when even these “ dead should hear the voice of the Son of God.” Now we know that the dead man hears not ; and hence we find here, by considering the subject, a difficulty that some have been hampered with entirely removed. Our Lord does not speak of a man that is naturally dead, whose soul has departed from him, but of a man who is dead in law ; and hence he calls upon the dead to arise, to believe, to lay hold on the blessings set before them. They were dead in trespasses and in sins, but God has manifested the Son of his love, who has died for their offences, and risen again for their justification ; hath purchased their pardon, and offered up to God a full, sufficient, perfect sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

Thus, then, the dead in law hears the voice of the deliverer—the voice of pardon. When the poor felon, under sentence of death in Newgate, finds that the royal clemency has been extended towards him,—one of the finest gems in the crown of the British king ; may it never be removed ! may the mildness of its lustre continue, and shine luminously, as long as earth and water shall endure !—when the poor criminal hears that the king has pardoned his offences, and blotted out his crimes, and it is said to him, “ Thou shalt not die ! ” the

sentence of death is remitted, and the man rejoices in his liberty. So in the gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaimed in the world, sinners can hear that Christ, having died for their offences, and risen again for their justification, they need not die; for they hear the gracious proclamation, "Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth," that is, all to the ends of the earth, "for I am God, and besides me there is no Saviour." A poor felon, condemned because of his sins, and amazingly alarmed in consequence, cries, "What shall I do to be saved?" And the response to him, on the ground of the gospel, is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!" and if thy family believe, thy house also shall be saved. And such are the glad tidings, my friends, that are carried from one part of the earth to another, and are so abundantly proclaimed in the place of your nativity. Jesus has died for your offences: you have all sinned against God, and forfeited all good and excellence, because of your crimes; but look to HIM who made an atonement for you; take that atonement to the throne of God's infinite grace and justice, and he will honour the all-perfect sacrifice you bring; for its sake, he will blot out all your past offences, admit you into his favour, restore you to his image, fill your souls with joy, and your fruit shall be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Christ said the hour was coming, in which the dead were to hear his voice and live. The hour came—the dead heard that voice, and were quickened; hours and days continued to succeed each other; and as apostles and apostolic men went throughout the land, and throughout the different provinces of the world, proclaiming liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that were bound, there was a continual succession of immortal souls that heard and be-

lieved, and were saved from eternal death. This is that work which, from your fathers, has descended to you, which you are handing down to your children and their posterity, that there still may be witnesses proclaiming to the people, in whom there is salvation, and righteousness, and strength ; and for all that believe in him are “justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” The law of Moses pardoned no crime—made provision for the pardon of no crime ; nor can any law make such provision without defeating and annihilating its own end, design, and sanctions. On the ground of the gospel, then, alone, there is redemption for man.

I would just observe that it is usual for the Scriptures to point out three kinds of death—natural, spiritual, and eternal ; and answering to this, to point out three kinds of life,—temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Now without going into any detail of argument, on the nature of life and death, which, by the help of God, I am prepared to do if necessary ; I would just take up the subject shortly, in the popular way. Natural death implies what is called the separation of the body and the soul ; the body ceases to live when the soul—the spirit, the informer, the quickener, the supporter, the grand intelligence of the body, ceases to be in connexion with it. Spiritual death consists in a disunion between God and the soul. You have not forgotten the account of man’s creation. God beheld the beautiful form laid before him : he *framed* him as the word properly signifies, in all his parts and members, in their various connexions, in their mutual dependence on each other, and their relations to each other. Thus, by the skill and power of God, he was formed out of the dust of the earth, and the body, without imperfection, lay before his Maker ; but as yet, there was no soul, no spirit in him ; and it is said, that “God breathed

into his nostrils נשמת חיים and so Adam became a living soul." The body that before was perfectly organized, then received its inspirer; and the principle that gave it vigour, sensation, perception; that constituted it a human soul, and enabled the body to walk and move, was breathed from God himself, and is no formation of the dust of the earth. Hence it constituted no integral part of the body; it is not material; for God made the body perfect in all its parts, every bone, muscle, pipe, channel, everything that was necessary, and the whole mass of blood that was to circulate and carry life when it became instinct with the spirit of life that God was to breathe—all was made complete; and God, by breathing from himself, from his infinite energy, "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" the lungs inflated, pulsation began to take place, the vital fluid circulated through the whole system, and "man became a living soul!" Here then, my friends, you will find an illustration of the spiritual life of which the Scriptures speak. Take away the natural life, and you leave the body deprived of animation—dead; so, withdraw the influence of God from the mind, and you leave the animal man as the beasts of the field; that is, spiritually dead, as the soul's being in connexion with its Maker, constituted spiritual life.

But there is the third description—the eternal death, and the eternal life. And as natural death signifies the separation of the body and the spirit, and as spiritual life signifies the union of God and the Spirit, so, my friends, the eternal death—that most dreadful, most appalling phrase—signifies the separation of the body and soul from the presence of God, and consequently from communion with him to all eternity. And what is separated from God? If it be an intelligent spirit, it must be unutterably miserable; for God is the fountain of perfection and happiness; and it is only in proportion as

we receive his influence, partake of his image, and have a sense of his approbation that we have happiness ; and when his influence is largely enjoyed, when the sense of his approbation in the soul is perfect—when the union between him and the soul is complete, the soul being filled with holiness, you have only to add eternity to it to have what is called eternal life, to be eternally happy and glorious. Separate a man from God, his body may continue in perfection, its organization may remain complete ; but the influence of the Spirit of God being withdrawn, his holy image not being impressed upon his soul—for it is impossible that it should remain in a state of union with God, the two being infinitely dissimilar—nothing but the carnal mind, which “is enmity against God,” remains, and God cannot be united to that ; for, says the apostle, “it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Hence, as cut off for ever from union with the fountain of happiness, that soul must be eternally miserable.

Now, my friends, we find that this worst of all evils may be prevented by our rightly receiving the salvation that God has prepared for us. “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. By and by, my friends, you and your preacher shall hear this voice, saying, Arise from the dead, and come to judgment ! If we are found then planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be raised in the likeness of his resurrection, and we shall arise to glory, honour, and eternal happiness ; but in order to this, we must hear the voice of the Son of God, that now, at this hour, in this place, and upon this occasion, addresses us. We must lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel ; and in hearing, we shall receive that pardon which he has bought with his blood, and that holiness which the Spirit of God can

alone inspire the heart with, pervading all the powers and faculties of the mind, purifying and refining everything, bringing down all rule and every high thing that exalteth itself against the simplicity of the knowledge and the purity of the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Everything, then, that tends to communicate and continue this life must come from God. Mark, then, these two things; first, God is the author of life, and he is, secondly, the preserver of life. Creation was necessary to give existence, and providence is absolutely necessary to continue, and direct it to the accomplishment of those objects for which existence was first imparted. Providence is not less necessary to being than creation was, or than creative energy was necessary to impart it. When man was created, it required the same supporting energy to continue the being that was made; it required what was called Providence, which is a series of manifestations—many of them inexplicable to us—of movements, of energies, of assimilations, forwardings, and so forth, in order to keep things in their right place, to conduct every thing to its right end, and make everything conspire together so as to accomplish the great end which God originally intended them to effect.

Now, my friends, let me by a natural transition remark, that whatsoever tends to help man to answer the ends for which God made him—whatsoever tends to preserve man in life till what is called the time of his probation is perfected, whatsoever tends to keep him under the advantages of life till the end of his existence be accomplished, must be from God, as every good and perfect work comes from the Almighty. And let me tell you, one of the principal agents that God employs in preserving man, is man himself. To man he has given experience, reason, and what is commonly called humanity. Have you learned what that is? many of you know what

it is. Humanity is that feeling which man has to man ; that kind of conscious affinity which each human being has to every other human being. And what springs from this humanity ? What is called sympathy. Sympathy, indeed, at first sight, seems another word for humanity, but it expresses the idea in a different point of view. Sympathy gives man to feel anxiety for the welfare of him to whom he is united, as to a common stock. He who has humanity wishes well to mankind. Sympathy enters into the troubles, distresses, and privations of our fellow-creatures. Humanity does not exactly so : it acknowledges the great truth, " I am bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," bound to him by relations that my Almighty Creator has himself constituted : but sympathy calls the man to enter into the state of its object—to feel in his feelings, to suffer in his sufferings, and to rescue his life from destruction ; that comes not so much from humanity as from sympathy and compassion. Humanity is a principle that God has inspired into the hearts of men generally. Sympathy is one that God implants as an especial gift. Sympathy signifies suffering with others. Compassion is the Latin word for the Greek, which signifies the same thing. Humanity acknowledges all these obligations, and excites a general feeling, but sympathy, or compassion enters into the man's state, dangers, distresses, privations, feels for him, and is so concerned for him that he cannot be satisfied till the individual is brought out of the danger to which he was exposed, or relieved in those sufferings and distresses which humanity would simply deplore. This sympathy excites, not only to feel mere anxiety, but to do all that is possible to relieve distress and affliction.

We need not wonder, then, when we perceive the strength of this sympathy, that men, seeing the danger of a fellow-creature, will put forth all their strength, all

the mental and physical energy they have, in order to redeem him from ruin, to relieve him from distress ; and if he has fallen under the leaden hand of apparent death, to endeavour, by their utmost energies, to restore him to life and usefulness.

I do not wonder, in reading over the reports of the Royal Humane Society,\* to find men who, from their profession, may naturally be supposed to be men of feeling and of courage, such as lieutenants and other officers in the royal navy and army ; nor do I wonder greatly at their amazing exertions, however creditable they may be, and deservedly so, to themselves. I know they deserve the particular regard of this society which they are destined to receive, and have invariably received, for their uncommon exertions ; but I know that wherever a proper sense of humanity, and at the same time, of sympathy, exists, such exertions must follow ; although the person who possesses them, may not have the wisdom or experience, or natural courage that those persons have who are brought up to hardihood and warfare to prepare them with activity and effect for the places they are intended to fill. All this exertion comes from humanity, from which flows sympathy, and from which, combined, will naturally flow exertion to the utmost limits.

As I have stated that whatsoever is suited, whatsoever tends to redeem life and preserve it, must be included in all that is said here by the Lord Jesus concerning the death and life of which the text speaks, and must come from the fountain of good, I have no difficulty in saying, —I say it boldly and fearlessly—that this Royal Hu-

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\* The preacher was now addressing a crowded congregation in City Road Chapel, and was about to make a collection in aid of the funds of the Royal Humane Society. It was on the morning of March 25, 1832.—EDITOR.



mane Society is an emanation from God's infinite mercy and compassion towards man. I was known to some of the principal persons that organized this society, and who, under God, have brought it to its present state. I was acquainted intimately with them, and I have known them to be men not merely that fear God, but men that love God ; not only men of humanity, but men of sympathy—men of compassion ; men not only that put forth all their powers, in order to relieve a perishing creature, but to do everything they could to bring back men that seemed to be removed from society by an untimely death. I have seen them anxious and persevering in all this, and bringing God, as it were, with them, ever looking to him as the grand Source whence all good must come, and from whom all success must be derived.

Now, my dear hearers, I wish you to prepare yourselves for a story that will make you, perhaps, feel a little, and feel so much as will cause you to give some glory to God. I said I was acquainted with some of the principal originators of this Society, and I need not say I was well acquainted with Dr. Letsom, and I will tell you a story relative to that good man. "Doctor," said I, "you have been very much conversant with everything respecting the Royal Humane Society. You have been now long engaged in that work, and you and your friends have been principally active in carrying on its provisions and plans and management, and dispersing its blessings throughout the land. Pray, what does your experience, Doctor, teach you respecting the state of those that evidently have been dead, and would have continued under the power of death, had it not been for the means prescribed by the Royal Humane Society ? Have you ever found any that were conscious of the state into which they had departed ?" "I have never found one," said he. "Not of all those that have been revived, to your own

knowledge, that were dead as to all human appearance, where the heart had ceased its pulsation, the lungs no longer played, the blood no longer circulated, and there was every evidence that the person was finally deceased?" He again answered, "No." "Doctor," continued I, "I have not been so long conversant with these matters as you have been; but my experience in things of that kind has led me to different information. I knew a person that was drowned; and that person, to my own knowledge, had a perfect consciousness during the whole interim, and also declared many things concerning the state through which he passed." "But was the person drowned?" said the doctor. "Yes," said I, "completely drowned. I have no doubt of it whatever." "Had you the testimony from himself?" he inquired. "I had, Sir." "Could you trust in him?" "Most perfectly." And then, assuming an attitude he was accustomed to assume when making anxious inquiry respecting anything, he said—"I should wish to have had the examination of that person." I looked him stedfastly in the face, and I said, "*Ecce homo! Coram quem queritis adsum!*" "I am the very man that was thus drowned!" He arose immediately. "Well," said he, "what were the circumstances?" "I will tell them simply," said I. "I was a fearless lad, and I went to the shore of a fine river that pours itself into the Irish Sea, riding a mare of my father's. I was determined to have a swim. I rode the mare, and we swam on till we got beyond the breakers entirely; but when we had got over swell after swell, and were proceeding still onward to the ocean, the mare and myself were swamped in a moment! I was soon disengaged from the mare; and as I afterwards found, she naturally turned, got ashore, and went plodding her way back to home. In a moment, I seemed to have all my former views and ideas entirely changed, and I had a

sensation of the most complete happiness or felicity that it is possible, independent of rapture, for the human mind to feel. I had felt no pain from the moment I was submerged ; and at once a kind of representation, nearly of a green colour, presented itself to me ; multitudes of objects were in it, not one of them, however, possessing any kind of likeness or analogy to anything I had seen before. In this state, how long I continued, he only knows who saved my life : but so long did I continue in it, till one wave after another—for the tide was coming in—rolled me to the shore. There was no Royal Humane Society at hand ; I believe the place is not blessed with one of them to the present day. The first sensation when I came to life, was as if a spear had been run through my heart. I felt this sensation in getting the very first draught of fresh air, when the lungs were inflated merely by the pressure of the atmosphere. I found myself sitting in the water, and it was by a very swelling wave, that I was put out of the way of being overwhelmed by any of the succeeding waves. After a little time, I was capable of sitting up ; the intense pain at my heart, however, still continued ; but I had felt no pain from the moment I was submerged till the time when my head was brought above water, and the air once more entered into my lungs. I saw the mare had passed along the shore, at a considerable distance, not as if afraid of danger, but walking quite leisurely. How long I was submerged, it would be impossible precisely to say ; but it was sufficiently long, according to my apprehensions, and any skill I now have in physiology, to have been completely dead, and never more to breathe in this world, had it not been for that Providence which, as it were, once more breathed into my nostrils and lungs the breath of this animal life, and I became once more a living soul ; and at the space of threescore years, you have this strange

phenomenon before you,—the preacher before the Royal Humane Society.”

And now, after having heard this, I only ask you of what value and importance must be the exertions of such a society? Had I not been rescued from that watery grave, on the mountains of Israel my voice had never been heard; the thousands that in this country and elsewhere have heard from me the testimony of Jesus Christ, would not have received it; and if I have been the instrument of turning many from darkness to light, in different countries in which I have travelled, it is owing to that intervention of God's mercy that saved me at that time, and spared me to announce the gospel of the kingdom of God. If you have ever profited by my word, show the sense you have of God's goodness in preserving me; the same that he has exerted, by the Royal Humane Society, in behalf of six thousand persons in London and its vicinity, that have been brought to life and saved from death by its instrumentality, by giving liberally to the support of an institution whose object is so benevolent, which has God for its author, and on which his blessing has so signally shone. Consider, too, that the human soul is of infinite worth; and that, perhaps if at the time the twelve persons who are here and the other six thousand that have been restored, had died then, they might have died to all eternity. But they are spared, and I am spared to tell the goodness of God, to receive the salvation he has provided for fallen man, and in the presence of God and man to acknowledge that providence which has been manifested in the preservation and prolongation of life! I hope, then, you will give what you can this day, for the encouragement and support and extension of this charity. And if you love God and love me, you will be particularly charitable; and depend upon it, you never pleased ADAM

CLARKE more than you will please him this morning, if you give liberally and largely to the support of this institution.

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*Extract from the Report, 1832.*

It is not possible to form an estimate of the private happiness which this Society has been productive of during the last fifty years. They who have marked its progress may form an adequate idea of the benefits it has conferred on mankind ; but those alone, who have been restored to the bosom of a fond family, can feel its full value. Religious advantages, as well as those of mere humanity, may also be urged in its recommendation. Books of piety and devotion have been placed in the hands of the intended suicide, and means have thus been afforded for repentance.

Longevity has been generally esteemed the greatest temporal blessing conferred upon mankind. In the moment of peril, we all, with a convulsive grasp of a drowning man, cling to this life, and seek to prolong our intercourse with relatives and friends, which it is so painful to us to relinquish. Suppose but one in ten restored, what man would think the object of this Society unimportant, were he himself, his child, relative, or friend *that one* ?

In the introduction to one of the early Reports of the Institution, the directors acknowledged, in the most glowing terms, the liberal support they had received from the citizens of London. The objects of the Society were, at that period, confined within the precincts of the metropolis ; but such was the success which attended the efforts of the founders, so many benevolent hearts were gladdened by the extraordinary instances of re-

covery, that the directors were enabled to extend its sphere to a distance of thirty miles. The progress of enlightened humanity was rapid; similar institutions were happily formed, and the interests of that cause which the Humane Society was instituted to promote, were established by the liberality of a rich and powerful nation.

The committee are happy to find that fifteen still-born infants have been resuscitated within the last year at the Lying-in Hospital. In concluding the Report for this year, the committee beg to make an observation, which they are assured the reader of these pages will consider reasonable. The annual contribution of each benevolent friend is so small and so inconsiderable, in proportion to the benefit which it promotes, that it must be deemed a national loss, if the Society is allowed to decline for want of funds adequate to its purposes. Its salutary plans are extended to the rich as well as the poor; and as in all temporal affairs, the former ought to be the guardians of the latter, it is hoped they will generously consider the benefits that are derived from the Royal Humane Society, whether as a source of happiness to individuals, or a source of triumph to the Christian.

## SERMON LXIII.

### GOD'S LOVE IN JESUS CHRIST, CONSIDERED IN ITS OBJECTS, ITS FREENESS, AND SAVING RESULTS.

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1 JOHN iii. 1, 2.

1. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is."

I SUPPOSE several of you will think that this is a strange text to preach from, what you expect should be a missionary sermon.\* Had I thought it inappropriate, you would not have heard it read now. It seems to me to point out to us the ground of our work, our hopes, our wishes, and the reason of all these. But you will see at once, that if this text be treated as its nature requires that it should, it will require all our attention—our almost fixed attention, our earnest prayer to Almighty God, that he may open our hearts that we may under-

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\* Delivered on the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in Great Queen St. Chapel, London, April 27, 1832.—  
EDITOR.

stand the Scriptures, and that, our hearts being affected, we may feel and rejoice under the power and influence of his Holy Spirit.

Here, it appears to me, there is no room for imagination. I shall not indulge in it. There is no scope here to vindicate an address to the passions, instead of to the heart; and you will see at once from the sublimity and excessively pure nature of the subject, that we can do but little good with our reason, unless that reason is specially assisted by the powerful influence of the Spirit of God. I can scarcely tell you why I should have taken this text, because I tremble under its weight, but it has again and again forced itself on my attention. In great fear and trembling I have applied to my Maker, and wished to turn my attention to another subject—to some subject especially that might appear more consonant to the peculiar business of this day; but I have been brought back again and again to this; whether God intends thus to humble me by exposing my weakness, or to edify you by giving a word himself on this most difficult subject, and that I should be the means, in his hand, of making some wise unto salvation—however this may be, God will secure that great end, and he will be glorified thereby.

“Behold,” says the apostle, “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” We may ask, in considering the perfections of the divine nature, Why has God made man? Why does he continue to work a chain of miracles for the preservation of his life? And why has he done more than all this? When man had sinned against him, and prostituted his being and his powers, why has God condescended, in such a strange, such an unaccountable, such a painful, and so expensive a way, to redeem his soul from the bitter pains of an eternal



death? To what can we attribute all this? Is there a perfection in the Divine Being, what is called an essential attribute of God, that will give an answer to these inquiries? Infinitely great, and holy, and pure, and independent, he needed nothing that he had made. The goodness of all the creatures he has formed, extends not unto him. Completely independent, perfect in all the infinitude of his attributes, he can need nothing ; and it may appear strange to us, that he seems solicitous to do so much for us, as if he himself were interested in the work and its results. I cannot say that this is to be attributed to his infinite holiness, his justice, his purity, his truth. These are essential attributes in the divine nature ; and yet never did a work that was not consonant to an infinite and eternal reason, and he must have such to induce him to work at all.

We read of God's love ; we read of it much in this epistle ; and the apostle, who was well acquainted with the mind of his Maker, the disciple who is represented as leaning upon the bosom of Christ, and being admitted into his special confidence, tells us, forgetting or passing by all other attributes, that "God is love." But what sort of a love? Am I to understand that term as it is commonly used among men, or consider that love, as known and felt among men, as something to represent the concern—the affectionate concern, that God's infinite mind feels, in order to make men wise, and holy, and happy? If you find yourself embarrassed to answer these inquiries, you must just take up his words as the apostle gave them, "God is love." And when we consider it in connexion with the text, we may have some general view of the subject ; for it is only a general view of the subject ; for it is only a general view that we can take of any of the perfections of God, but it may be quite sufficient to make us wise unto the salvation proclaimed

in this book. "Behold," says the apostle, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" He has not called upon us to contemplate it merely. He has not called us to consider its degree. This he passes by, and in passing this most important point, it would seem that he copies his Master, when he tells you, in a well-known passage, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Even Jesus, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and who has declared so much to mankind, does not attempt to tell us how much or how great that love is, whatsoever the feeling may be, that God has manifested to the world in the redemption of the sons of men. So has he loved the world! Here the apostle says, "Behold, what manner of love!" by which he certainly means the kind.

See what kind of love God has bestowed upon us! See the manner of the exhibition of that love! See how it has been shown to men! See how it has illustrated its own feelings and its own nature, by the acts it has performed! Behold the manner of this love, and you will find out perhaps something of its nature by beholding the manner of its action; and this is in general, the way in which we can ascertain the peculiar attributes of any being. What does he do? To what end—how does he work? So, when the fountain sends forth his waters, it is to make that rivulet by which the fields are to be refreshed, and at which men and cattle may slake their thirst.

See then that feeling which God calls love in himself; what has it produced? It has produced man; that rational being, man; that extraordinary being, man. What is he? The creature of God's wisdom, of his power, and of his goodness; made in his own image and

in his own likeness. Oh, what is the image, what is that likeness? If we found man as he came forth from the hands of his Maker, we could answer this momentous question, What is the image, what is the likeness of God? Man was made in that image—man was made in that likeness. And if we take the apostle's illustration of it, we find that it must have consisted in "righteousness and true holiness;" or as it might be rendered in righteousness, truth, and holiness. These we find in God in their infinite degree; or rather, he is a source of infinite perfection; and these degrees are only known by their manifestation to us; and it is by its manifestation that we can find out what is the degree of that love. But what induced God to make this being, this transcript of his own eternity? to make you and to make me? to make us such as Moses tells us, under the inspiration of God's Spirit, he did make us? God must have an intense and infinite desire to manifest his own goodness and his own perfection. It has been stated by men who have not only thought deeply on the subject, but felt much, that the creation must have proceeded from God's love. He projected the creation of man. There was a time when man was not; so that his creation was the effect of a design in the divine mind, and why? to manifest his own perfections! Could God gain anything by that manifestation? No, because infinitely perfect, he can have nothing added to him; infinitely perfect and self-sufficient, and beyond the reach of all actions, of all agents, he could have nothing taken away from him. Therefore it must have been from a simple, pure affection of love; he made man for the manifestation of his own perfections in him, or that he might be made a partaker of his holiness, and consequently, of his happiness. We cannot conceive that any intelligent being can be happy, unless he is holy.

Unholiness or sinfulness supposes disorder ; disorder in mind supposes irregular affections and irregular desires ; and suppose we allow that the Creator could give wisdom, and judgment, and will, and a great variety of passions and appetites, such as are essential to his creature's being, we cannot imagine it possible that that intelligent being could be happy, unless his wisdom were complete, in reference to the things that are to be the objects of his pursuit, unless his judgment be positively correct with reference to the conclusions he is to draw, and unless his will be perfectly regular, that it may safely enlist all the other powers of his mind in those services, and likewise in those blessings that belong to the utmost perfection he can attain. Everything that is irregular, such as evil passions, evil desires—everything that thwarts any of his powers, such as conscience remonstrating against judgment, must make him wretched. God, then, to make his creature happy, made him a partaker of his own holiness, in order that he might be united to his Maker, and—pardon the expression, for I must speak after the manner of men, even when I am speaking of the things that pertain to God—God sought for an opportunity, as it were, to manifest the greatness of his goodness by making a creature that was capable of receiving much of the manifestations of his power, and live in a state of infinite happiness and holiness with him for ever.

On this principle, then, of love, did God make man. His infinite mind conceived the divine idea. Man was not made from eternity. There was a time when God chose to take into his consideration the propriety of making man ; and then, as you find, he made him like himself ; and it was impossible, while man was in that state, that he could be miserable ; he was made holy, pure, in union with his Maker ; in his nature, no thought

existed that was contrary to the holiness of his God—no attachment of irregular passions, and no irregular passions to form that attachment. Hence, from the fulness of God's influence, he was receiving grace upon grace while he continued in that state. God could rejoice in the work of his hands ; even in the plenitude of his own perfections and his own infinite independence, he could look on this newly-formed creature, and admire the work, and delight himself in leading him to the fountain of living waters, pouring out upon him more and more of the heavenly refulgence, and maturing, if I may so express myself, increasing those powers and faculties he had given him, to make him capable of receiving more and more of that exhaustless happiness in which he himself eternally lives.

Thus, my friends, we learn, if this reasoning be correct, that God made man from the principle of love, that he might make him happy with himself, and endued him with powers capable of receiving that happiness ; and that while he lived in this state of union with his Maker, he was necessarily happy ; and happy beyond anything we can conceive or describe. He knew no sin—his heart had no irregular feelings, no evil passion—there was no erring judgment—all was right, all was just, and true, and holy ; for another kind of intelligent being God could not make. This is one of the things, strange as the assertion may appear, that is impossible for Omnipotence itself. He cannot make evil : whatsoever he does is necessarily pure and holy. Need I tell you the story that this inspired book goes on to detail, in a variety of relations, by many inspirations, and various circumstances and multitudes of facts, that this man most strangely fell from this state of holiness in which he was created ? We may ask, Was it possible, if he had been made in such a state, that he could have ever fallen from

it? That is, in other words, Is it possible that any created being, no matter how high, even the highest product of the power and wisdom of God, should change? Every thing but the Eternal God may change, and is changeable. God alone, that is infinite in his own sufficiency, and from eternity to eternity, is liable to no change ; but all the works of his hand are liable to change ; and if his wisdom were to invent myriads of worlds of various kinds, supported in various ways, still would they be liable to change ; for nothing is unchangeable but God. Man, then, has changed ; and an evil change it has been. He ceased to depend upon him who was the source of his being, and from whom, in his intimate union with him, he enjoyed unutterable happiness ; he seems to have conceived the possibility of living out of connexion with this fountain of infinite bliss and happiness. As well might we suppose, that the stream which is emitted by the fountain could contribute the usual quantum of water, when that fountain has ceased to emit it, as that man, independent of God, can be happy. Seeking, then, to become as God, he lost his union with his Maker ; and from that day to the present, he has, in an endless variety of things, that he calls pleasures, diversions, amusements, and modes of happiness, been seeking to regain that bliss which he lost, by ceasing to live to and feel his dependence upon, his God.

And look upon all the tribes of flesh and blood, every nation of men, wheresoever they are found, of whatever colour, however they may be educated, whatever, from their circumstances of life, may be and must be their pursuits,—they are all seeking, in the works of his hands, and in the imaginations of their hearts, that very happiness, which reason, and the Scriptures, tell us can be found in God alone. Is not this the very reason that no nation ever found out God, or found out true happiness ?

Have we not an account, of the truth of which there can be no doubt, that when all the opinions of the various sects of philosophers, and great teachers among the Gentiles, or in the world, had been examined, in order to find out what that happiness was, that all men were in pursuit of, which millions and millions in every part of the world were seeking, and how it was that they had never found it out,—there were two hundred and eighty-seven different opinions, equally well-accredited ; some, perhaps, better founded than others, but equally baseless, when investigated, as to the foundation they pretended to rest upon. It was the imagination that they rested upon, in the commencement of its structure ; it was the imagination it rested upon in all its operations : it was building castles in the air, and no one succeeded : God was not found out—happiness was not found out : and to this hour we should have had no conception of the truth on this subject, any more than the wisest of these heathens, if the everlasting God, the fountain of knowledge, and goodness, and truth, had not given us this book. Were there any right notions concerning him before it? Trust me, my friends, to give an honest opinion—the best I can form on the subject, by no small acquaintance with the labours of those who have lived in different periods of the world, whose opinions have come down to us in their writings, that there was none that had found out this God, and that there was none that had found out the way of happiness ; and it remained for God to give information to man concerning his nature, to demonstrate himself to man in his works, and, at the same time, to show his will to man, in giving him the revelation that is contained in this book.

“When,” said the apostle, “the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe ;” by that preach-

ing, by the proclamation of God's goodness in sending his Son Jesus Christ into the world, which was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and which was foolishness to the Gentiles,—by that very foolishness of word or doctrine, God has shown to man his being ; he has shown to man where his happiness is to be found, and afforded him all the means, and all the instruction necessary to guide him in the way, and lead him to the accomplishment of the end. “Behold, then,” says the apostle, “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us !” Whence the word “Father ?” Look at the human race—look at angels and men, and hear God speaking and calling himself “the Father of the spirits of all flesh.” They came from him ; and, as a father careth for his children, so has God cared for his intelligent offspring.

It is a remarkable property in the father whose heart is not quite imbruted and bedevilled, and which God manifests in his own especial way, that the children, who have rebelled so much against him, and were so capable of knowing him—who were so capable of committing sin in consequence of the vastness of the power they brought to act on the subject that was forbidden them,—he seems to pity and love most intensely. Why, my friends, this is a subject that it is as much as the human soul can bear up under. Let every man feel and speak for himself, and let every man say for himself, “That I should be an object of love and regard to that God of infinite perfection, holiness, purity, and truth ! How is it that God could love me ?” How is it that God can love you ? Sometimes, indeed, you find it difficult to credit it. Man had not, but for that love, been spared a second after the first transgression—but for that love, you had not bread to eat, nor a friend to condole with you in misery ; our condition now is signalized as much by the love of that Maker, as it ever could have been, or



as that of Adam and Eve was at the commencement. There is a love which feels complacency and delight ; and the same love, on the alteration of the circumstances of its subject, feels compassion and pity. Under this love the human race exists at the present day ; through all the generations of man, this love has been exercising itself with man's present and eternal welfare. God, then, is your FATHER. You can call God, Father, as legitimately as you can call him God—as legitimately as you can call him by that name which is supposed to be the most expressive of the perfections of the divine mind—namely, Jehovah. Yes ! that infinite Jehovah, that unspeakable Being, calls himself your Father. Yes ! he is the Father of you, men and women ; and such pity as a father hath towards his children, the like pity sheweth the Lord God towards them that fear him. And, although you may live frequently without thinking much about him, without thinking much concerning yourselves, he continues still to guard you, though you know it not ; and now and then, when you look at the strangeness of your preservation, the narrowness of your hair-breadth escapes from danger and death, you are surprised into a kind of astonishment at his love, his providential goodness, and his long-sparing mercy.

I need not dwell long in illustrating the unspeakable freeness of “that manner of love which the Father hath bestowed upon us.” It was, of necessity, gratuitous, because of the perfections of the divine nature. It can add nothing to God, it can take nothing away from God, howsoever the matter turns. If we were all to go to that place of torment which all of us have deserved, because of our transgressions, he would lose nothing by it ; and if you all turn to him with all your souls—and may God give you no rest till you do so ! would the conversion and salvation of you, and all your fellow-creatures

on the face of the world, add anything to the perfections and happiness of your Maker? Nothing at all; and yet, behold how God loves you!—behold what manner of love the Father bestows upon you! He has no reason but what he draws from his own infinite love, and his concern for that which he hath made, to communicate to man a measure of his own perfections, in order that he might be happy with him to all eternity. The Father hath bestowed this love upon us. We need not wonder, then, that this love so great, this desire to communicate happiness, to effect the great purpose of his own workings, should be attributed to that God who is infinite in perfection and goodness.

We may wonder that such love should have been bestowed upon persons such as we are, who, having heard of this God, and in some measure known this God, have not glorified him as God. He has bestowed this upon us; but was it to be a love that should show itself by providential actings and interferences, merely, in behalf of our well-being? Was it merely such as should lead God to work a chain of miracles, in what is called providence, in order to cause grass to grow, and corn for the sons of men? Was it by making the sun, moon, and stars, and all that is related to, and connected with, our earth, as parts of a great system, appointing to them their particular paths in the regions of trackless space, and so governing them, that they have not receded a hair's breadth from the beginning, demonstrating that this is the effect of a continually working cause, and that it is impossible even for the planetary laws to exist for a second, if God should cease his energy in continuing their power, and directing them to their end? Why, God has shown you these things, but this was not his grand object. This was a part of the great work which God gave himself to do—he made the earth—he caused

the grass to grow for the cattle—he has set in heaven the sun, moon, and planets—he has formed the drops of the rain and the dew—and he is continually refreshing the earth, preparing it for the seed, working in the seed, in order to produce life, and increase of vegetable matter, so as to support the life of man, and of other animals dependent thereupon. But if he had proceeded no farther, this would have been only concerning himself with man as a mere material being, in connexion with the present state of things, rising out of the earth, remaining on it for some time, falling under the influence first of disease, and then of dissolution, and mingling with the earth again. Surely it would not, speaking after the manner of men, be worth God's while to do these wonders—to accomplish, properly speaking, so little, when we compare the insignificance of time with the duration of eternity! No, my friends; and therefore we are led to the gospel system. If we had not the gospel system, here we must have stopped, and we could go no farther. I might tell you, that God had done all these things, and was continually working all these wonders, but I must say I do not know why. I see my father and my mother sinking into the grave, I see them mingling with their common earth; I have known them rise up early and eat the bread of carefulness, in order to support life and sustain their family; but why all this should be done, I cannot tell, if this life have nothing to do with an hereafter. If our present state is connected with, and leads to, no other state, or form of being, than that of which we are now sensible, we cannot see how infinite wisdom should concern itself with us—how, to use a vulgar, but very nervous proverb, “a majesty so vast should stoop so low to lift so little.”

But he has done all this in order that you might become his sons, the children of the Almighty, be readmit-

ted into the family of heaven, that once more you might be allied to God, as you were at the beginning ; and that, though you have fallen, deeply fallen, and your lofty powers and best perfections have been degraded, and soiled with the dust, you might yet become glorious in holiness, capable not only of knowing him, but of dwelling *in* him and *with* him to all eternity. This manner of love has been bestowed upon you, that you might become sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Oh, blessed plan ! Oh, wondrous—Oh, astonishing plan !

And then, look at what was necessary in order to bring about the salvation of our fallen world ! Was it a small thing that Jesus Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person—was it a small thing that he, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, should be manifested in the flesh, should empty himself, as it were, should assume the likeness of man, and humble himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ? Oh, greatest of all miracles ! that Christ should die at all, because human life was only forfeited by crime ; and Jesus was infinitely free from anything of that sort. And how he could die, how his lofty and unbounded perfections could modify or twist themselves in order to consummate that sacrifice, without which no atonement could be made, and no soul saved, is beyond my power to comprehend ; but the fact, blessed be God, is sure ; this most holy Jesus, this God manifest in the flesh, died to take away our sins—lay for a time under the power of death, in order to provide deliverance from death ; rose again for our justification, and gave such proofs of that fact as never were given of any other fact, and such no other fact was capable of redeiving ; and commanded that, in his name, repentance and remission of sins should

be preached everywhere ; proving, by the demonstration of his word, and the power of his Spirit's working, that he, by "the grace of God, had tasted death for every man"—for every human being—every one possessed of a rational mind and human body that God ever formed, or was propagated into the world, or shall exist till the consummation of all things.

All this has been done, my friends, that you might be "called the sons of God." Perhaps, looking into your own hearts, you will inquire how this is ? I have heard people say, and I do not much like the principle from which it comes, though perhaps there may be a good feeling in it—"Why *me*?" I say, "And why *thee*, indeed !" Why makest thou the thing a peculiarity to thyself, as if God had singled only thee out ? Why confine it to me, rascal me, when Christ has died for all ! And every human being may cry out for himself, He loved me ! he died for me ! he lives and makes intercession for me ! He has "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers," and you cannot hear this heavenly tale without believing ; thou art surprised almost into faith, and thou canst not but believe that a God of infinite mercy and infinite love would feel thus and act in this manner, and give his Son Jesus Christ to die for thee. Behold, then, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you, that you should be called the sons of God !

I have taken this in its general application. We may descend, for a little, with the apostle, and look at the circumstances of a people that are found connected or mingled with those that do not believe in this Jesus, and take these views of God's infinite mercy and love, whether they be heathens or Jews. "Therefore," saith the apostle, "the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." The men of the world are looking for satisfaction and happiness in the gratification of their own sensual minds,

in the fulfilment of the desires of their flesh and of their minds—in all those things, in short, but where the happiness is to be found ; they are looking into their bosoms for blessedness, while blessedness cannot be found till God purifieth the heart by faith ; and until blessedness be produced, because he dwells there ; “They know us not”—they do not approve of it. The Jews did not approve of this doctrine : they crucified the Lord of life and glory. The apostles proclaimed their dead and living Lord, and salvation through his blood, but this was too strong a stricture upon their own conduct, who had been his crucifiers, and they would not receive the testimony ; they continued in their sins. Oh, that the poor descendants of Abraham should continue hardened till the present day ; while millions and millions of Gentiles, whom they called dogs, and considered the most execrable of human beings, and thought it impossible that they could realize anything holy or just, and get to the heaven of their God, or to the bosom of Abraham, much less lie in it, have been converted to God,—filled with the God of Abraham, their whole souls baptized, regenerated, made happy, and have triumphed over death and sin, and gone to that kingdom of glory which Jesus Christ hath opened to them that believe !

“They know us not, because they knew him not.” Mark this. Indeed, it is an almost universal maxim, that people who will not seek their happiness in God cannot well tolerate the men that are otherwise minded ; and this is the true fountain of all the persecution that has been raised against the church of God in every nation or age of the world—an enmity against a God of holiness and purity ! We can hardly suppose, fallen as human nature is, that the mere man will oppose the mere man, because he seeks a particular thing, that the other thinks he cannot have, or that the other grudges

him. No ; it is the spirit that is in the man who is living in sin, and living a foe to his Maker ; for if, as the apostle tells us, " The carnal mind is enmity against God," then that carnal mind must be enmity against the work of God, against the Spirit of God in the souls of men. So that till that enmity is taken away, man is the foe of man, and the wicked persecutes the just ; but when the evil spirit is taken away, when the carnal mind is destroyed, then that man that was the persecutor of his fellow, feels for him as his brother, takes him in the arms of love and affection, and is ready to spend and be spent for his present and eternal welfare.

The apostle goes a little further ; and I pray you, in the name of the great God, to mark this ; for there is an increase of meaning put by the apostle, in the words to which I am about to allude : " Beloved, now are we the sons of God." There is a sense which I have already given you in which every human being is a child of him who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh ; but there is also a sense in which God is the Father, especially of them that believe in his Son Jesus, because they are represented as being made partakers of God's holiness ; consequently, they are united, as children of the same family to God, the sovereign master of that family—they become members of his household. And when St. Paul bowed his knees before him, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, he refers to those that have turned from sin unto God, and found redemption in the blood of his Son, become children of the Most High, and have the most positive assurance and evidence of this new relation, the Spirit bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. Oh, in a work of such eternal magnitude, where everything that we can call great, glorious, and interesting, is at stake, if our happiness,

and the evidence of our relationship to God, had been left to inference or to reason, we should have little confidence in the Creator of the world, and little confidence in the value of that blood which bought our peace ! but God has not left it to this.

My brothers and sisters, believe an old man, who has studied this matter longer, perhaps, than any or most of you have lived. Believe him, after having tried by every rule of reason of which he is master, he is obliged to come to this—that there can be no genuine happiness on this side of heaven, nor assurance in reference to the reality of a state of blessedness, unless God has a testimony to give to the conscience of man, that he, in mercy, has been brought into God's wondrous love, and that, being regenerated, he is united to the family of heaven ; not inferring this from portions of Scripture, however legitimately and directly taken up, but from the direct influence of God's Spirit on his soul, showing him, and giving him to feel, that he is born of God, and is a child of the Most High. This is what the apostle insists upon—"Beloved, now," says he, "are we the sons of God." We are called to this state of salvation—we have found the pearl of great price. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are incorporated with his family ; God's Spirit shows us that we are his children ; and we know this—we have as much confidence in the reality of it as we have confidence that we are the children of an earthly parent, and that we have proof of a providential goodness in the care and attention paid to our wants, and the provision invariably made for our support and comfort. "Behold, now are we the sons of God !" This is what I wish you not to rest without. Do not face death without it. Do not ! It is an awful thing to appear before the living God, if you have not the testimony in your souls that you are born of him. That was



a good saying of John Bunyan, when his poor wretched, self-deceived pilgrim, trusting to vain appearances, and satisfying himself with general belief, without positive application, came to the gate, "he had no certificate to be taken in." "He fumbled," said he, "in his bosom for it, but found none;" and then, said he, "I saw the shining ones were commanded to bind him, head and heels, and throw him into the hole at the side of the hill." "He had no certificate"—he had no title—he had not the sprinkling of the blood—he had not the Spirit to witness with his spirit, that he was a child of God, and the door was shut upon him. God forbid that it should ever be shut upon you or your preacher! \* "Behold, now are we the sons of God." Well, how do we differ from other people? There is this one general difference. If you are the children of God, and walk in the light as he is in the light, your whole conduct will manifest love to God and love to man. You are persons living for eternity, and striving, according to the power which God has given you, to lead others in that way. You win your bread like others, only, perhaps, we may say, you are winning it by honest means, and doing nothing, in order to get your food and raiment, but what is good and righteous in the sight of God. Well, you shall die, also, like other men; and some will say, then, Where is the difference between the righteous and unholy man? I remember the saying of a physician at Manchester, well known to Mr. President† behind

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\* This is a fine strain for an old disciple of Jesus, who had passed his three-score years and ten, and who was himself to appear at the gate of the city, in the space of four months; and speaks strongly in favour of his having his own certificate in his bosom in the witness of Spirit.—EDITOR.

† The Rev. George Marsden, President of the Conference, sat, during the Sermon, behind the Rev. Doctor in the pulpit.—EDITOR.

me: "Oh, Adam," said he, "I like to attend your people in their last hours; they die so peaceably and so contentedly. I have not my spirit tortured with their cries, moanings, and complainings. No; your Methodist people always die well." There is a good testimony from one who, I believe, at that time, though he had a general belief, really had but small acquaintance with the Christian system.

But now we come to a point on which I feel I can speak but very little: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." And, oh, what shall we be like, when in the heaven of heavens? We shall have better bodies than we have got now; though they shall be dissolved, yet they shall be built up on indestructible principles—they shall know death and disease no more—nothing shall afflict them, nothing shall tend to injure them, or the mode of their being; and though we shall have a body—this same body—it shall be made like to Christ's glorious body, that very body in which the fulness of Deity dwelt, and which he took with him to heaven; our body shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. But, "it doth not yet appear," saith the apostle, "what we shall be." I told you I would not indulge myself in imagination. Imagination can have nothing to do here. It may be a deception of the mind—it may arise from fancy, from folly, and be produced in the mind by the circumstances by which it was affected a few days or hours ago. "But," says the apostle, "we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." I am satisfied I can go no further. "We shall be like him." All that likeness that was lost shall be fully restored; so that the body itself shall appear there, without any manifestation of its fall or weakness—no fall

shall any longer be recorded there, but as the manifestation of man's once exposure to misery and endless wretchedness, and the manifestation of God's infinite goodness in saving him by the incarnation, passion, and death of his Son—"We shall see him as he is." Oh, what is God? What is it to see God—what is it to see God as he is?—to see him in his own mode of existence—such a mode of existence as belongs to an infinite Being, that was from eternity and is to eternity, and exists in the plenitude of his own infinite Deity? "We shall see him as he is,"—in the mode in which that eternal God exists and manifests himself to all the angels, archangels, and creatures of his power. Here, my friends, is a subject for your contemplation as long as you live! Mix it with your business—mix it with your prayers—mix it with the sermons you hear, the Bible and the other good books you read, as helps to understand it. You are to be like God; and, then, here is the reason of it—because you shall see him "as he is." Here, then, I leave you.

Now, my friends, for the use of all I have said in reference to the Missionary work. In discoursing upon this astonishing portion of Scripture we have laid a foundation for your desires and efforts to help forward the Missionary work in order to bring a nation of ignorant heathens to know the God of love, and this Jesus who has given his life for mankind. Who would not give up anything, and everything, and all he could wish to have on earth, to be able to bring one immortal spirit to know this infinite God of love—to bring him who was a worshipper of devils, or something as bad, to worship the true God, and enable him to say, "Now I am a son of God, and thanks be to God who sent me his Bible and his Missionary!"

Oh, my friends, do you know the greatness, the neces-

sity, the utility of this work? You have heard much about it, but you have not heard the seventieth part of it. You have heard but little of it from our reports, and from those heavenly men who have taken their lives in their hands, and have gone far hence to proclaim among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. They cannot declare to you the extent of their success, though they can tell you the names, perhaps, of the persons who have been admitted into their Societies. They cannot tell you how many millions of the seeds of life have been sown by their ministry which God is watering now, because they do not see the fruits springing up, for there is not yet the full ear; but still you have much encouragement and many motives to persevere in your good work, arising from the success which has already attended your efforts. Do not forget, that before any of these great Missionary Societies existed, that now grace and adorn, and are an ornament to this City, we were engaged in the Missionary work, and I was in the work; for there is not an older missionary, perhaps, nor one so old as myself. I have seen and heard of this work all over the earth; my heart is as much in the work as ever it was. I do not know that I have a wish in this old spirit of mine, nor an idea that can be formed in this old head, that does not tend to go forward to help this work and recommend it to the world, and especially to those to whom I have the opportunity, and, I might say, the felicity and honour of recommending it. And though I would not have you apply to this work a penny that you could not give God an account of without blushing in the day of judgment, yet, my friends, I would recommend you to give everything you possibly can, consistently with honesty; all that you can call your own—all that you can spare from the necessities of your family, I could wish you to give—seriously believing that there

is no other work on this side heaven on which the man, knowing the Son of God, and feeling the dictates of humanity, can bestow his money better, or more to God's glory and approbation and the good of his fellow-men, than this.

I would read you a little paper, which I have extracted from the Missionary Report, and I wish to draw your particular attention to it. I find that we have not less than one hundred and fifty-six missionary stations, in various nations of the earth, and these are found in the four quarters of the globe, and they are found in the fifth quarter also. We have two hundred and eighteen missionaries,—ministered missionaries, persons received into the church of Christ, not only as members of that Church, but as accredited ministers of God and his truth ; then, in connexion with them, of catechists and teachers, we have no less than a hundred and sixty, making a total of what others would call real missionaries, amounting to three hundred and seventy-eight. We have innumerable bodies of persons raised up under the ministry of these missionaries, who give their labour gratuitously, who do not consider themselves as claimants on our funds, because they support themselves, of whom there are no fewer than fourteen hundred. Thus, there are seventeen hundred and fourscore who are employed in the missions directed by the Methodist Body. Well, my friends, are these labouring in vain ? No ; their fruits are various and multiplied. Of members—persons joined to the church of Christ, admitted on the true ground of determining to flee from the wrath to come, and to live unto God ; we have not less than forty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-three names on our books and class papers. Well, my friends, are not these showing their care for the rising generation ? Yes ; the young are the subjects of main attention to the missionaries themselves

and of course, the parents that are converted to God, and some who are not, are glad to put their children under the direction and instruction of the missionaries. There are, of these children in the foreign stations, attending the Sunday and day schools, twenty-five thousand four hundred and twenty. Of the West India Colonies you have heard much. You have heard much of slavery—a thing that is scotched at both ends, and which God's curse anathematizes in the middle! Of slaves, in our West India Colonies, there are twenty-four thousand four hundred and ninety-nine in our societies; and I am sure, since our work began among them, in 1786, there have been many thousands and hundreds of thousands that have been converted to God, and have gone safely to the heaven of heavens, where they are like Christ, because they “see him as he is.” Of negroes, and persons of colour that are not slaves, there are seven thousand two hundred and eighty-one; making an aggregate of slaves and converted men, that were essentially heathens before, not less than thirty-one thousand seven hundred and eighty; and all this under that missionary work which you are called together to-day to aid. You will, I trust, do wonders beyond your common mode of acting, in order to increase the number of these saved souls, to send more missionaries, and these missionaries will have more men, women, and children for the objects of their instruction; and, that God, who is working with them, will give them more power to proclaim his salvation, his mighty Spirit working effectually along with them.

Well now, will you support this work liberally this morning? It is very likely that this old man may not plead with you again. He would have no objection to live until God's appearance on the earth, and till the archangel's trumpet sounded, to promote the glory of

God as his greatest delight, and to bring souls to love that God that loves him, and to love that Jesus who died for him. Come forward, then, this morning, and give according to your power. And, remember, my friends, that the eye of the God of love is upon you. He will delight in the widow that brings her mite, and in the rich man who brings his store, into the treasury of the Lord, to assist his cause and extend it in the world. Amen.

## SERMON LXIV.

### THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE.

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ACTS III. 19.

19. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

I BEG leave to read a word or two in this text in rather a different way ; and I am satisfied that all those who hear the mode in which I read them, will know that they are the strict expression of the words that the apostle spoke : "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, *that* your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing *may* come from the presence of the Lord." We were supposed to have had, more than half a hundred years ago, the doctrine of the dispensation, so to speak, of repentance, brought into our chapels ; and we went forth throughout the nations, declaring the necessity that people should repent, and turn from their sins to the living God. Multitudes heard and feared, and did turn to God ; and we might say, that, of that generation to whom we had access, and who put themselves under our further instruction and direction, the great majority had repented and turned from sin ; and we could say, we ministered to a people that were saved of the Lord. But we soon found it necessary, not to omit this doctrine, but to ex-



tend its meaning and sanctions, because we saw it was not sufficient for people merely to repent, and ask mercy from God, but there were heights, and breadths, and depths of holiness, proclaimed in the gospel, and required by the Law, which it was well for us to dwell upon, that the people might see what they were called to.

When I was a little lad, I got into company with some very wise and learned men ; and one of these was, in his time, though now no more, one of the Secretaries of his Majesty's Councils. He had been in the habit of hearing Methodists preach—his father and his mother had received the doctrine of the Methodists, were saved of the Lord, and we might say, for aught we know, adorned the doctrine of Jesus Christ in all things. A young man was present at the time—a brother of whom became a preacher, though he did not continue long in our ministry ; and this young man, that I speak of, observed, “This doctrine of Methodism is not likely soon to end—this work among them is not likely soon to terminate. Mr. Wesley,” said he, “somewhere has stated, that the revivals of religion have lasted generally about thirty years—a generation,—and afterwards a general coldness gradually takes place. The people have not advanced far in holiness, but considerably in sincerity—the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins is more faithfully preached ; and there is a doctrine proclaimed, that our country was unacquainted with, though we knew it in name, the operations of the Spirit of God, and his influence on the souls of men. It was insisted upon by these preachers, that this was the lot, and the portion, and the privilege of every son and daughter of God. That it was necessary to be pure and holy, and that the people should be turned from their outward sins in order to be happy, we had already found out ; but they went on and taught us another doctrine, that we had in our

Bibles, and in our liturgy, and in our homilies, and everywhere, but of which we knew nothing—the doctrine of salvation from all sin. We thought it impossible that ever any man could be saved from his sin in this world ; but this doctrine was proclaimed by these people with no less evidence and with no less earnestness than the other doctrine, which I have mentioned. Now, Sirs,” said he, addressing himself to the people that were by, “I think that this revival of religion amongst the Methodists is not likely to end, as long as these doctrines are preached : for when a man feels himself convinced of sin, he is exhorted to look to God for mercy : when he finds this mercy, and has got a testimony from God’s Spirit that his sins are blotted out, then he is informed, that he must go on unto perfection—that he must have his heart purified from all unrighteousness—that he must be saved from his inward sins as fully as he has been from his outward sins : when this is effected—for many have received this doctrine in the truth of it, and felt the power of it, and lived the life of it—then they are told they must grow in it—have more of God’s light and love, and power in them—that if they do not grow in grace, they will lose their grace ; for all the graces that God gives he gives more to increase. Look,” he continued, “into our best writers of the last century, and they generally leave the people in the article of justification by faith : here is the whole secret : people saw nothing farther to be obtained, nothing farther to be sought ; the rest of their lives seemed to be spent in thanksgiving to God, that they had received the unspeakable gift ; their religious feelings and zeal became inactive ; the earnestness they felt to bring others to the grace they had received, began to cease ; and, perhaps, Mr. Wesley’s opinion, on the whole, might be considered very generally correct—that revivals ended

in about thirty or forty years. Now," said he, "everything is different: when a man has attained any degree of grace, he is told he must have more—when he has got into one important state of salvation, he is told he must proceed and get into another; and when he has got into that utmost state of salvation, being saved from all sin within, he is gravely and solemnly informed he must grow in every grace of the Spirit. Thus," said he, "they are kept going on, till they come to eternity at last; so that this revival of religion among these Methodists, I believe, will never terminate."

He is dead, and the others that heard him are dead; and the little boy that then was, is now your preacher, in grey hairs, to proclaim salvation among you. I am fully satisfied of this—as fully as that I have a spirit in this body—that while Methodists preach these truths, and in this order and way, it is impossible, in any nation of the world where the doctrine is preached, that the people can lose their religion; or that it ever can be said, that the revival of religion, once among the Methodists, has ceased so many years since.

This morning, while looking over this chapter, this doctrine that cannot be too strongly insisted upon, struck my mind very forcibly. When I took up the hymn, I found it was one of those hymns in that little compilation that was only known as a book of public worship among the Methodist connexion, called, "The Shilling Hymn-book;" and when our friend behind blew his bellows, to send forth his sweetest notes,\* I found it was exactly one of the first tunes that I ever heard in a Methodist chapel;

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\* It is remarkable that the Doctor, who was so opposed to instrumental music, should,—though "blew with his bellows" was sufficiently expressive,—admit of any *sweetness* in the note in such a place.—EDITOR.

all this has led me to speak what I have spoken, and will lead me to speak several other things which I have not spoken. What saith the Spirit of the Lord God to the preacher and congregation in this chapel? Why, in the verses which I have already read, it is written: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord:" or as I have changed the text, "that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

It is not always the first word in the text that requires the first observation. "Repent," says the apostle. Why did he call upon the people to repent? What is the reason why he spoke this word? We generally understand that it signifies, at least, a humiliation of mind; and it was because of the state in which they were, that he called upon them to repent. What was that state? It was a sinful state—a state of rebellion against the living God. From this, two or three positions may be laid down. Man is a sinful creature; who dares deny it? In all my long intercourse and acquaintance with men in various places, I have only found one man and one woman to deny it. It was ignorance in the old man—it was insolence in the young lady. She assumed that having reason given to her by the Almighty, it was sufficient for her direction and guidance through all the intricacies of life. She believed nothing of this book, because she was above it. She did not look to God for any extraordinary help. She did not feel the need of it; in all her circumstances, she found her reason ready to act its part, and as she thought, sufficiently to support her. We leave this old man and this overgrown child, the one as being ignorant, and the other as standing aloof from God, and all the influences of his Spirit, and denying the necessity of them. Now, in this place, we shall

find that there is something further laid down by the apostle. All those Jews, whom Peter addressed in the language of the text, had sinned ; every one that has sinned has broken the law of God ; for the breach of the law constitutes sin ; but sin itself does not exist in appearance till the principle of it, lodged in the heart, begins to work. There is a principle of sin in man ; that principle of sin being ever active, and finding many things in the human mind, in its present state, congenial to itself and ready to follow its impulses, every man sins against God ; and every man that sins against God, is exposed to his curse ; and he that is not saved from his sin, must fall under God's curse. Is this a state of ruin ? It is a ruinous state, if we mean thereby a state of helplessness and desperation. Is not that state ours ? We have a book called the Bible, and this doctrine is proclaimed in that book ; nay, it shows that man, who is sinful and under the curse, and who must perish everlastingly, if he continues under it, may be saved from the curse—there is a possibility of his salvation ; so that on the one hand we see the severity of God, or, in other words, his strict justice, for he punishes sin—and on the other, we see the mercy of God, for he has provided a remedy for the sinner. I need not tell you, who have been so long instructed in divine things, what this remedy is : “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life,”—that this ruinous state might not continue ; that of this ruinous state which brings to perdition, the entail might be cut off : more than this—not only has God provided that the man should not go to the hell of fire, and perish everlastingly, but that he should be saved from all the evils of his nature, and have eternal life.

This is the foundation of what the apostle said in this

chapter, as you will see upon reference to it. He addressed himself to those persons that had sinned, grievously offended against God—who lay under God's curse, were in danger of perishing everlastingly, and, because of sin and sinfulness, having no well-grounded hope of an eternal state of blessedness. "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." But to heighten the doctrine, for he gave them to know its meaning, it was necessary to show them that God had recorded these things. You have sinned against God, and God has entered these sins—they are in his book. This is in accommodation, it is true, to the weakness of man; but you may consider God's infinite memory, if I may use such a word in reference to Him, as having all the actions of men fully in its immediate view; in other words, God, being an infinitely perfect and an infinitely wise Being, could not but see whatsoever is wrought, or felt, or imagined by man, because he is present with everything that he has formed, and it is by his energy and presence that the things he has formed continue to exist; and to a Being like God, of infinite knowledge and wisdom, all that was ever done continues as existing now before him; he is the fountain of wisdom, and is at all times intimately and infinitely present with every being he has formed.

Well, this is the book that the apostle refers to, in which he tells us our sins are all entered; and from which he gives us to understand they may be blotted out: "Repent and be converted," says he, "that your sins may be *blotted out*." Here a fearful apprehension must arise from the consideration, that God enters into his book, and has still in his knowledge all the sins and transgressions which in thought, word, or deed, we have ever committed against him. In fact, has he seen them all? His omnipresence—his omniscience show it! In fact, does

he remember them all ? His infinite wisdom proves it ! It is impossible that he should forget them : he sees all things, and is present with all things. And are all my prevarications, are all my lies,—are all my falsehoods—are all my deceptions—are all these in his book ? Yes. Are all my unholy thoughts there ? Yes ! for he does not register the actions of the body merely, our acts of mind are before God, and the act of the body is important only as it affects man, and the state of society, accompanied with, and attesting the act of, the mind ; so that, if the body had never lent one of its powers to execute one evil intention, the man would stand to be judged ; and if unsaved from his evil, would be condemned for the acts of the mind. When sin is conceived, there is a full act of the mind, understanding, will, affections, passions, the whole is assembled, and the consent of the whole is required by the soul of man, before his hand is put to the act, or his feet walk in the path of transgression. This is the sin. All this, then, is entered in the book.

We shall see, that this doctrine of repentance and of forgiveness of sin, must be continued throughout the generations of men. It was not a dispensation for one time, unless there had been but one generation of men and women intended to be over the face of the earth ; but as they became supplanted by those that proceeded from them, and as time carried down its inhabitants into eternity, and others sprang up in their places, so that the families of men continued, and as every man that came into the world came into it born in sin, and with its principle within him, so this doctrine must be preached among all the different tribes of men, and during all the lapse of time, till the archangel shall blow his trumpet, and swear by the living God, that there shall be time no longer. Well, my friends, we have got the sin—we have

got the register, and we have got the piercing eye of God looking on this book ; and we find, that whatever is registered is, in consequence, out of the reach of man. Oh ! how vain was the thought—how ridiculously contemptible and blasphemous the idea, that man could forgive sin—could blot it out of the mind of infinite holiness and justice, or that by his works, or anything that he might suffer or endure, he could atone for it, or could reach the book in the bosom of God and blot out those characters which had been written there by his hand ! My friends, God has given us to understand, by every saying in his book, that as the sins—all the sins we have committed, and which he has registered, of whatever kind, and in whatever circumstances, are against him ; and as he is the Judge, no man can discharge those indelible entries which God has made in that book ; and the fair deduction that reason would make, if we had not the Bible to assist us, is simply this : He who wrote them in can only blot them out. He has intrusted the register to no one—not to Michael, though he is so called because he is like God ; he has not given that book to him, no, nor to his church, as a few mistaken words, referring to quite a different subject, have been perversely interpreted to imply ; but with God alone is this register ; nor has God placed at the disposal of any man the power, the authority, or the mercy to blot out its characters. As he has written them in, so he must discharge them, that the register against man, in the eternal day, may not be found against him, because he has found mercy—because he has got pardon.

There is a reference here to a custom very frequent in ancient times, before you and your fathers were born. When paper was scarcely known, and parchment was the only thing used to make books of, and to make



entries upon, there was a method of discharging the ink from the parchment or vellum, on which something not of the most important kind had been written, but important for the time ; and of writing down in the place which the other writing had occupied, a different kind of writing. I have myself books of this description, where, perhaps, seven or eight hundred years ago, a piece of writing had been discharged in all its letters ; but in places of the margin which were not needed to write the new thing on, you see the remains of the old letter. When religion became a subject of national concern, many of the ancient books had their writings erased by art, for the purpose of writing others in their place. I myself have seen the Gospel of St. Matthew, written in the twelfth or thirteenth century, over a writing of a much more ancient date. That interesting Codex is in Trinity College, Dublin, and even the ancient writing was wonderfully made out by the Rev. Dr. Barrett, who discovered it, and died vice-provost of that University. Here, then, we have the thing referred to. Here is the writing ; it is in God's possession—he only can discharge it ; he can write a new name upon it ; he can take away the charges that are written in the book, and registered also in your conscience ; for conscience receives impressions of them from that book ;—he can discharge them so that the keenest eye shall not be able to find out the sins that you have committed, and which, if published before assembled worlds, would sink you to annihilation. In that case, the man is in no apprehension ; he was so ; but the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against him, is taken out of the way ; the charges have been erased—they have been washed away ; so that not only God's book—God's justice, that wondrous remembrancer, registers nothing

against the transgressor, because he has been forgiven all ; but when the man comes to look into his own soul, to see the old charges, he finds them all gone !

Would you let an old man, that will not trouble you very long, just tell you how he felt when God shone upon his soul ? Wherever I looked, I had God's holiness and my own heart brought, as it were, parallel ; there was not a charge that God had against me registered in his book, but I felt, as it were, here, in my conscience and heart ; when, in crying to him for mercy, after a deep night of repentance, which I shall explain in a little, in reference to yourselves, I found all my load of anxiety, and fear, and dismay removed from my mind : I looked up to heaven, and saw nothing but glory there—I looked up to God, and saw nothing but my Father there—I looked up to Jesus, and saw nothing but my Saviour there—I looked up to the Holy Ghost, and saw him smilingly registering my salvation there—I looked within, I saw not a character to charge me there. I felt as if I had never sinned against my Maker, and yet conscious that I had done so ; with the fullest consciousness, at the same time, that all was blotted out from God's book and my own too.

“ Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” *Repent*, because you know you have sinned. Repent, therefore, because God has made a way for your escape. Repent, therefore, for the judgment has not seized your soul, and carried it away into the eternal world. Repent, because you have so many means of grace and so many hopes of glory promised to you. But what is repentance ? Why it is sorrow for sin. But is it not more than this ? Repentance implies regret, but it implies also a knowledge that the thing has been done ; and hence our word, signifying

repentance, has been interpreted *after-thought*, *after-wisdom*. For instance: a man has done some sin; he thought upon this; he thought upon it, in reference to the individual that suffered the injury—he thought upon it in reference to himself, for he should not have done it—and he thought upon it in reference to the great God, against whom it was committed; and in thus thinking about it, his eye affected his heart. This is the reason why the word signifies *after-thought*, *after-wisdom*, and so on. . So that it appears a man must be at home, in order to begin the work of repentance; and he must endeavour to continue at home, to see the nature of the work, and see how it goes on. I mean that he should look into his own heart, and see the black characters there, in such a way, that he sees the finger of God has written them, as truly as he knows that that finger wrote the Decalogue on the two tables of stone that Moses brought down from the mountain.

But repentance implies also that we forsake sin. The man that sees he has thus sinned, that his sin is thus registered (as his conscience does not tell him a lie, and he does not believe that this book would tell him a falsity), this man, I say, begins to think, I must cease from this way; if I go on, I shall perish. And, perhaps, he will take a common way of reasoning: Ten to one I may perish after all; but if there be one chance, humanly speaking, to a thousand or to ten millions, why then, surely I should strive to get this chance fulfilled; for there is a hell of fire that burns for ever and ever—there is a justly-offended God, that will not forgive iniquity, unless the man repent of it, and unless he accept the ransom that God has provided for him. My friends, I beseech you to look into your souls, and see if you have repentance. As sure as God made you, you have

sinned, not less than the Jews to whom Peter addressed the words of the text; nay, perhaps, you have had crimes of a new fashion, and tenfold ungodliness, all of which must be repented of, abandoned, and fled from. Repent, then; begin to sorrow. Can you think of having ever lifted up your hand against the God of eternal mercy—against the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—against him that shed his blood for you—against the Holy Spirit that has been divinely affecting you, breathing into you his influence, and causing his light to shine through you, and giving you, every now and then, a glimpse of God's glory, and shedding a hope through your minds that maketh not ashamed? Can you think of having sinned in all these ways, and offended such a God, such a Saviour, such a Spirit of sanctification and holiness, against the eternal Trinity, the God that never did you any hurt, that has fed you all your life long, while not one thousandth part of a second of time you have a right to, your life itself being forfeited? can you think of having sinned against a God that has given you the Bible, and faithful preachers, and opportunities of hearing his word preached, and all the other mercies that you enjoy, without sorrow, and contrition, and humiliation of mind?

Through the infinite mercy of God, we have seen the commencement, and now about the middle hour, of the seventh Sunday in Trinity. Well, my friends, we may never see another hour; but I would not alarm you about these things. I think it is possible most of you will live hours, and months, and years. I would not alarm you, as though your salvation were so much in hazard, as that though you began now, it could not probably be accomplished. I will pledge myself, that if you will begin now, seriously and in earnest, to consider your ways, and repent and be converted, God will nei-

ther let cholera nor devil take you away, or let one of you fall into the grave, till he has accomplished so good a work in you. Take courage, then.

But, if repentance signifies forsaking sin, what is to be understood by being converted? It is necessary to define this word; and then I shall show you some nonsense that has been attached to it. Conversion, in this place, absolutely signifies a turning to God, and receiving him in the manner in which he offers himself, and receiving that which he has appointed for our salvation. A sinner is represented with heaven behind him and hell before him, while every step he takes—and he often runs—is a step nearer to hell, and farther from that heaven of glory; he has got into the counterpart of the way; and while he goes on in that way, he cannot be saved: he must turn again—he must come back. The first thing, then, you are to do is, that you be converted, to look towards God—to turn yourselves towards God and heaven, that you cease from running in that way that leads to perdition, and take the road that leads to heaven. “Be converted!” But we take this word in all its meaning, in general; and I think, in some portions of God’s word, it is so taken in all its meaning; and the particular meaning is, not only a turning in purpose and intention, and in the position of the body, so that the man ceases to go in the bad way, but it denotes the whole heart being turned to God, embracing his will, receiving his mercy, pouring out itself in prayer before him, and taking in that wondrous act of God, the blotting out of the man’s sin, and his receiving the witness of the Spirit, that he is a Son of God. The man is said to be converted, that is turned to God with all his soul; that is turned to holiness with all his heart; that is turned from sin with all his might; and turned from the workers of iniquity, to find association and

companionship with those who work righteousness, and are going to glory.

But we have a variety of words that we join with conversion, and that perplex and spoil, rather than explain, its meaning. Thus, we say that such a man was *soundly* converted to God. What does that mean? Is there a possibility of being unsoundly converted? What is unsound conversion? It is no conversion at all. Then we have another word: we say, Such an one has been *savingly* converted to God; while being converted means the one proper thing. There can be no conversion but one; and when you say that the man is converted to God, it says all; that he has been brought to God, and has found the salvation purchased by his Redeemer. But then we see he becomes sound in his mind, and the evidence of his salvation is given in his conduct; we see that this is not hypocritical, because he is living in the way in which God would have him to live. The words we add spoil its meaning—add nothing of force to it; and we had better be as simple as we can in the terms that express the salvation of the soul.

Now, my friends, we must be converted, not according to this or that definition, of this or that church's catechism; we must be converted, as God says it—we must have our minds and hearts turned unto him from evil; and in thus turning, is always implied, a change of the heart, of its purposes, its feelings, its resolutions, its propensities: the whole man is turned to God—"Old things are passed away, and all things have become new;" and in this sense, the man is a new creature, who is in Christ Jesus. The man turns to God with all his heart, under a deep sense of his sin and sinfulness, and believes in Jesus Christ who died for him; for Peter, in the context, is preaching about Jesus, and showing that this was the key-stone of Christianity; and we take up the

same thing—we cannot come to God but through Jesus. And I doubt, my friends, notwithstanding all that the vain young lady said of the wondrous powers of her reason, we should never feel one penitential pang, if the Spirit did not bring it into the soul ; and when we feel our hearts truly sorry for sin, we know that the Spirit of God is at work upon us. We must, then, come to God through Christ Jesus.

This register is still in my eye : in reference to many of you, I seem to see the black register in so many bosoms ; and I am sure there is not a single heart that may not be saved from it : it may be blotted out before you leave this chapel ; and I pray God it may be so ! I say, Almighty Jesus cancel it, and let none of them take the black list away with them ! Let every one repent and be converted, and be enabled to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel !

“ Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” Perhaps you will say to me, that this time of refreshing has not come to you ; but that, when it does come, you hope you will repent and be converted. I tell you this is not the meaning. If you turn to God in the way of his direction, the times of refreshing shall come to you from the presence of the Lord. The times of refreshing come, in consequence of your turning to God with your whole heart. What is the refreshing here referred to ? Why, the word really signifies *re-souling*—putting *another soul*, or, if you choose, *re-lifeing*, or *infusing fresh life into one*. I am sure, it is a good thing to have *life*, when *death* is walking through the land. Repent, and be converted, then, that your sins may be blotted out, that the time of re-souling, re-lifeing, may come from the presence of the Lord. This is a fine idea. To get a new title to life ;

we had a title to life when we were first created, before we fell; but by sinning, we forfeited it—and by being redeemed, we acquire a new title to life; the claims of the law upon us having been satisfied, according to the wondrous economy of God, he transfers that debt which was owing to his justice, to his mercy. On many occasions, we see times of refreshing under the preaching of God's word—heavenly feelings, strong aspirations after divine things, ardent longings after God's Holy Spirit—strong prayers that we may find salvation, that we may not live to die without it, and that we may live so under it that we shall care nothing about death. Well, wherever the gospel is preached, it is a time that God has appointed for giving new souls to the people. The gospel, then, is preached here this morning. I am not going to pay myself the compliment of extreme humility. I preach to you the gospel, not indeed so well as I could wish, but as well as you need, if you will only incline your hearts to the truth as it is in Jesus, that you may be saved by it. Well, then, take the text with you—"Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Let us give God an occasion this morning—I speak this with humility—to send down times of refreshing upon this place,—give him an opportunity of displaying his boundless mercy. If there be any of you that have long sought God sorrowing, this is your time of rejoicing. If any of you begin to think it is all over with you,—no, no: why, there is a Saviour before the throne: but the time may come when it will be all over with you—but it is not so yet. "I saw," said the apostle, "a lamb, newly slain, before the throne." What a wonderful thing was that! Even at this time Christ Jesus had been risen from the dead, after his sacrificial atonement, a hundred years, and yet the apostle



saw him, just as if newly slain. This is the whole secret of the mediatorial kingdom, and of the incarnation and intercession of Jesus Christ. We have only to look to Jesus, and we see the continual reason why God, through the lapse of all time, should save souls, seeing that Christ appears before the throne, as a lamb newly slain, actually now representing his pouring out the sacrificial blood, as a satisfaction, atonement, and oblation sufficient for the sins of the whole world !

You see, my friends, I am unwilling to leave you—I am unwilling to give up till I feel in my own mind satisfied, that I have succeeded in persuading you to come to God through the Son of his love. Take this further consideration to encourage you—that we may get all the fulness of the gospel—those who have not yet the witness of the Spirit, but have repented, may get it this morning ; and those who have got it through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, but who mourn because there is anything in their hearts that is not according to the will of God, and want it taken away, may have their hearts cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that “they may perfectly love and worthily magnify God’s holy name.” Here, then, is a mighty work of God—his Spirit knocks at the door of your hearts—open and let him in, and he will abide with you for ever ; he talks of supping with you—the last meal of the day ; and here, probably, referring to the last act of human life,\* he will

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\* This is one of the last sermons Dr. Clarke preached. It was preached in Stanhope Street Chapel, Wesley Place, Liverpool, during the Conference, on the morning of August 5, 1832, the month on which he died. An extraordinary unction attended its delivery : and when such forms of expression as are to be found in it, as, “ Let an old man, that will not trouble you long, just tell you how he felt when God shone upon his soul,” “ I am unwilling to

sup with you—he will stay with you—he will be with you even at the hour of death, and conduct your souls, at length, into his immediate presence, where there is fulness of glory and pleasure for evermore. Oh, then, open the door of faith, and lay hold on the hope set before you in the gospel! May God give you and me a wise understanding in these things, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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give up, till I feel satisfied, that I have succeeded in persuading you to come to God,"—"he talks of supping with you, the last act of human life," "God will neither let cholera nor devil take you away, or let one of you fall into the grave, till he has accomplished so good a work in you;" when, it is repeated, such forms of expression are coupled with his own speedy dissolution, and that too, by cholera, it is impossible not to be affected, though witnessing at the same time, the ripe fruit shaking from the tree. drawing to the very last the multitude after him to heaven!—EDITOR.

# OUTLINES.

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## No. I.

### THE JEWS AND THE EGYPTIANS.

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DEUT. iv. 7—9.

7. "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for ?

8. "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day.

9. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life ; but teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons."

PREFATORY PROPOSITIONS.—I. God ever delights to produce the most important and the most numerous effects by the simplest and fewest causes.

II. So completely has he conceived his own design, in relation to the government and salvation of men, that he has, by his original plans and operations, pointed out and represented all the succeeding dispensations and

operations of his providence and grace, the former being representatives of the latter.

III. God has ever preserved a people to whom he has revealed himself, teaching them, 1. The knowledge of himself. 2. The worship which he requires. 3. The duties built on that worship. And, 4. The means by which those duties should be performed.

Those PRINCIPLES may occasionally be referred to, during the discourse which should take in,

I. The character of Moses, who gave the exhortation.

II. The character of the Egyptians, among whom he had his education.

III. The character of the people whom he led out of Egypt. And,

IV. What is implied particularly in the exhortation in ver. 9, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul," &c.

In the course of this sermon, too, the objection that Moses learnt all his knowledge from the Egyptians, may be particularly considered. Moses could not have received his correct theological notions from the Egyptians, for they had no correct theological knowledge themselves; on the contrary, it is well known that they were the grossest idolators in the world, worshipping onions leeks, the scarabeus, the ibis, the dog, the monkey, the goat, and the ox. How then could Moses learn from such people the knowledge of the true God? *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. The learning of the Egyptians may be questioned, as to the extent usually ceded to them; then consider their architecture, and their being unacquainted with arches; the discoveries of Belzoni at Thebes, and the probability there is in the supposition that the arch which he found was of Grecian origin and workmanship.

God ever had a typical people, whom he made the

depositories of his will, and from whom he intended to convey that light for the illumination of the nations ; such were the Jews ; but they have reprobated themselves, and lo, God has turned to the Gentiles ; and it is probable that the British nation is now the representative people, by and from whom all the nations of the earth are to receive the knowledge of the true God ; in proof thereof the Bible societies and the missionary societies may be referred to, and largely insisted on.

The essence of the Jewish religion consisted in its sacrificial system ; this system was representative of the great atonement. On the coming of Jesus Christ, that system was at an end ; his sacrifice for the sin of the world being that which was by these sacrifices prefigured. Ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews have never been able to restore their sacrifices, though they have full liberty to do so, and especially in every part of the British dominions ; this is a remarkable and most curious fact, and proves that their sacrificial system is at an end, and that Christ is the true sacrifice designed by the law, &c.

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## No. II.

### THE PROMISE AND MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

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JOHN xiv. 25—31.

25. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and

bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28. "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father : for my Father is greater than I.

29. "And now I have told you, before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

30. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you : for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

31. "But that the world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

THE great point to be proved is, the connexion between heaven and earth ; and in order to this, establish the omnipresence and all-pervading energy of God, from the doctrine of cause and effect, from the vegetation of seeds, from muscular motion, the circulation of the blood, and from the revolution of the heavenly bodies.

That the soul is immaterial, and forms no part of the human body, may be proved from the scriptural account of the creation of Adam ; his body being completely formed out of the dust of the earth, in all its organization, before the breath of lives was breathed into it by the Almighty, and in consequence of which Adam became a living soul, or animated being. Allowing the scriptural account to be true, this argument is sovereignly conclusive. Establish the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind, and convict the conscience ; show the nature of sin, the way of salvation by Christ, &c. ; and explain at large the word *παράκλητος*, which may be shown to signify not only a *comforter*, as we translate it, but also an *instructor*, a *counsellor*, a *legal adviser*, &c. Expatriate on his office in reference to sinners, and the process of his operations

on such persons, convincing and convicting them of sin ; showing them the spirituality and holiness of the law which they have broken ; the penalty annexed to the transgression ; the remedy provided, and the nature of that remedy ; the claim a true penitent has on the mercy of God, through the sacrifice of Christ ; and the faith which he might exert in reference to his salvation, and then making intercession in him with groanings which cannot be uttered ; and lastly, witnessing with the understanding that the culprit's sins are forgiven, and the Holy Spirit becoming his sanctifier and comforter.

Further, show how it came this doctrine was not generally received by the world, that is, those who are governed by the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life ; "they cannot see him," says our Lord, that is, they will not believe the existence of a thing of which they cannot have palpable demonstration. On this point argue, that multitudes of things are and must be credited, of which we can have no such evidence, and that if such persons were to refuse to eat, before they could comprehend the manner in which the aliments were received into their stomachs, in order to nourish their bodies, they would never eat more.

The residence of the Divine Spirit in the church of God, "He dwelleth with you," and his indwelling in the souls of true believers, "He shall be in you," may be the concluding topics of this discourse.

## No. III.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S REASONABLE SERVICE.

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ROM. xii. 1, 2.

1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God *which is* your reasonable service.

2. "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

STATE the whole of this subject, beginning with the last clause, which may be considered to be the foundation proposition of the apostle, on which all the preceding exhortation rests.

I. THE WILL OF GOD. The term God may be considered as generally understood; but to help those who are not accustomed to examine subjects of this kind minutely, observe, that there are three attributes commonly acknowledged to belong essentially to the Supreme Being. These are omnipotence, omniscience, and infinite goodness. 1. Omnipotence, or power, to do all things which are necessary and proper to be done. 2. Omniscience, or wisdom, how to plan and do all things, to the most proper and best effect. And 3. Infinite goodness, which employs power and knowledge in behalf especially of intelligent Beings. If, therefore, this omnipotent Being undertake to defend man, his weakness can



be no reason why he should be overcome, even by the most powerful foe. If omniscience undertake to instruct man, his own ignorance can be no reason why he may be led astray by the cunning or subtlety of any adversary, howsoever wise or subtle. But his infinite goodness is a reason why man's native badness, deep sinfulness, and utter helplessness, cannot prevent his eternal happiness, as this God has plainly declared himself the friend of man, and "has so loved the world, that he has given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, although omnipotence and omniscience taken by themselves give no reason to a sinner why he should believe that God will exert these attributes in his salvation, yet infinite goodness gives the most sovereign reason that it will interest all the other attributes to co-operate in order to effect his salvation.

II. But what is the WILL OF GOD which we are called to prove? Will is that principle by which we can determine to do, or not to do, what appears to our reason and judgment to be proper or improper to be done, or to be left undone. In man, this principle is often confounded with headstrongness, obstinacy, and stubbornness, reason and judgment not being considered. Hence men act without reason, and indeed contrary to it; and when asked why they will do such things? give for reason, "they will do so, because they will do so;" making their obstinate headstrong conduct the reason of itself, which is no reason but absurdity. But WILL, simply considered, is a mere volition of the mind implying acquiescence, consent, or determination, relative to action; sometimes even wish or desire: *sic volo*; thus I will—I wish—I determine to do, or not to. And all this may subsist in man independently of understanding, judgment, and reason. But in God WILL implies a

determination to act, or not to act, as his infinite reason, understanding, and judgment sees proper. And a thing is proper or improper in the sight of God, as it is good and useful; or bad and destructive, or ruinous. Here the apostle gives its essential characters. 1. It is the *το αγαθον*, that essentially good principle. 2. The *το ευαρεστον*, that well-becoming, well-pleasing, or acceptable thing. 3. And the *το τελειον*, the complete, the consummating or perfect thing. Hence, the WILL of God is essentially GOOD, and what is not such cannot be its object; what is not becoming the dignity, justice, holiness, and truth of the Deity, cannot be an object of his will; and what is not complete and perfective, as to its object and end, in relation to what is to be done according to justice, holiness, truth, and goodness, can be no object of the volitions of the divine mind, in relation to man. And it is so demonstrable, that such must be the attributes of the WILL of God, that they are plain to all rational capacities, so that men are called *εις το δοκιμαζειν*, to have the fullest proof, conviction, and practical trial of them, “that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

Whatsoever, therefore, is from, or is accordant to, the will of God, must partake of these three principles; it must be good in itself, well-pleasing to the perfections of the divine mind, and accomplish or perfect the thing on which it is employed.

III. Now, as we came from this all-perfect Being, are accountable to, and dependent on, him, we owe the deepest reverence, the highest respect, and the most affectionate and invariable obedience and submission to his will, or, what the apostle calls *λογικην λατρειαν*, a rational service—a worship which is in its spirit, principles, tendency, and operation, according to reason.

But what is REASON? that wondrous principle, or

faculty, with which God has endowed every man ; that faculty which has caused him to differ from the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven ; that by which, in all general cases, he can distinguish good from evil—right and wrong—the agreement and disagreement of things—what is suitable or unsuitable—what tends to peace and safety, and what produces misery and woe. Reason here is nearly the same as “wisdom, that which looks for, and discerns the best end, and pursues it by the use of the best and most suitable means.” In a word, it is the candle of the Lord in the mind of man, or it is the true Light which lightens every man that comes into the world. But this gift is dispensed in various degrees to man, according to the various powers with which he has endowed them ; and it is a talent, which, faithfully used, will improve and increase to double, treble, or ten times its original sum. For it is not only an incipient power, but a recipient ; it receives influence from the source of Light, and is regulated and directed by the operations of the Divine Spirit. It is to this reason in man that God directs his revelation ; and it is by this reason that man judges of religion, and of all that professes to be a revelation from the God of both worlds ; and by this, man distinguishes all false religions from the true one, the earthly chaff from the heavenly wheat.

As religion is prescribed by revelation, and revelation proceeds from the will of God, whatsoever is agreeable to that will must be that which is prescribed by revelation ; hence, revelation prescribes and enjoins the reasonable service.

Revelation and reason have been often placed by injudicious persons in opposition to each other ; but that they should be contrary to each other is impossible, because they both come from the same source ; nor can

anything in divine revelation, in other words, in the Holy Scriptures, be fairly proved to be contrary to reason ; though as it is a divine science, revelation must contain much that is far above the reach of reason ; but even these things neither exhibit, enjoin, nor assert anything contrary to pure unsophisticated reason. Reason and common sense ever agree, and are often one and the same thing. Common sense says, God made, preserves, and provides for us by his grace and providence, so we should love, reverence, and obey him. His revelation shows the obligations under which we lie to him, and points out the worship and service which he requires. He who is our sovereign has a right to command us, and it is highly reasonable that we should obey him. And as it is notorious that his word never prescribes anything that is not for our own advantage, nor proscribes anything, but because it would be injurious to us ; hence, it is perfectly reasonable that we should obey him in all things. Thus, then, speaking even generally, the religion, prescribed by the Holy Scriptures, is our reasonable service.

IV. But God particularly points out what that reasonable service implies, viz. : That we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. As the terms in this verse are all sacrificial,—i. e., taken from the Mosaic law,—it is from that law that we are to learn their signification.

In all legal institutions for the government of countries and states, there are laws for the punishment of crimes, as well as ordinances which enjoin obedience ; so, for capital offences, there is the punishment of death. God has declared, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Every sin against God, the supreme Sovereign, is a capital offence, and consequently, the life of every sinner is

forfeited to divine justice. This is what is particularly recognised by the doctrine of sacrifice. The life of an innocent animal taken in the place of the life of a guilty man. God chose to prescribe and accept this for a season, in order to represent, and point out, that "Lamb of God which was slain (in the divine purpose) from the foundation of the world."

The animal offered in sacrifice was slain ; his life's blood was poured out ; and thus, life was offered for life ; and the death of the victim was considered the redemption price for the life of the sinner, by whom, and in whose behalf, it was offered. The mode of offering was this : A male without any kind of blemish, the best of its kind in the flock, was chosen—the offerer brought it to the temple, delivered it to the priest, put his hands on its head, confessed his sins over it, and then the priest slew it, and poured out its blood before the Lord ; and thus presented, it was a holy sacrifice, and acceptable in God's sight. He received it in reference to its object and its end ; and all being done according to the command of God, the service was considered to be a reasonable service ; as it is the highest reason to do what God commands, and as he commands. The sinner, truly and deeply convinced that he is such, first by faith in the infinite atoning merit of the passion and death of Christ, offers these to God as a sufficient atonement and sacrifice for all his sins ; and as such, God receives it, and blots out his sins, and sends his Holy Spirit to witness with the spirit of this pardoned man, that he has accepted him, and brought him into the heavenly family, in token of which, that Spirit enables him to cry, "Abba, Father," leaving no doubt upon his mind of the pardon which is now sealed upon his heart.

Thus redeemed, he becomes himself a sacrifice and

offerer: "He presents his body unto God, a living sacrifice." As the sacrifice for sin is given wholly to God, so the man who is saved by the blood of the cross offers himself to his Maker as a living sacrifice; a sacrifice that is always before the throne, and is living to God,—dedicating himself (the whole man in all his powers and faculties), to serve, honour, obey, and glorify his God for ever.

V. As he is no longer his own master, but is bought with the great price, he feels that he is not his own property; that he is not to do his own will, nor the world's work. He is "not conformed to the world," to the vain, wicked customs and manners, of an ungodly age; he is to "be transformed from it;" his body, soul, spirit, practices, objects, aims, and ends, being totally changed. He has new habits, and a new form; the exhortation is, *μη συσχηματιζεσθε αλλα μεταμορφουσθε*. This may be an allusion to the case of prisoners coming out of the pit; their prison garments are to be changed; they are to be clothed with clean and new garments; but this is metaphorical, for the garments represent their moral state, and is not literally to be understood; therefore, the change consists, *τη ανακαινωσει του νοου*, in the renewing of the mind; in a total spiritual change—for they who are in Christ are new creatures, "Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new; and being thus renewed, they are capable "of proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

VI. It might be reasonably supposed, that when these great privileges were properly laid before the people, and freely offered to them, they would gladly and eagerly embrace them; but this is not the case,—a sinner's heart is alienated from God,—he has a carnal mind, and this is enmity to God. It is, therefore, necessary to use strong

arguments, and powerful persuasives, to induce him to come to God for salvation ; therefore, the apostle says, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God." He might have said, "I command you by the authority of the sovereign Jehovah. By the penalty of the fiery law that issues from his right hand—by the thunders of his power—by the terrors of his throne—by the flaming fire in which he is shortly to be revealed from heaven to take vengeance on them that know not the Lord, and that are rebels against him." This he might have done, and have penetrated the soul with terror and dismay ; but he most graciously addresses the softer passions ; he threatens not, but promises ; he commands not, but entreats—I beseech you brethren. I am your flesh and blood—was once a sinner, like you, against my own soul—but I turned to God, and he has had mercy upon me ; you are my brethren, according to the flesh ; return unto God,—believe in his Christ, and ye shall become his children, and be my brethren in the Spirit. The apostle is not only affectionate in his manner, but deeply so in the motives which he proposes, "I beseech you by the mercies," *δια των οικτιρων του Θεου*—the tender mercies of God—such kindnesses and such compassions as the most affectionate father shows to his children ; and especially that tender mercy which caused him to deliver up his Son to death for the salvation of the souls of men. By these mercies, give yourselves to God, that you may be made holy, happy, and glorious to eternity.

## No. IV.

### APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP.

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ACTS ii. 42.

“ They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

THROW this verse into propositions.

I. All systems of religion have their first principles, or doctrines. Doctrine, is teaching; and teaching, or the matter taught, doctrine, refers to facts which it is the business of doctrine to explain.

II. At the head of all facts, stands God, the foundation of being and of activity. All systems of religion acknowledge such a Being; and the Christian religion acknowledges the true God.

III. On the doctrines or teaching of Christianity, the fellowship called the Church of Christ, or the spiritual members of his mystical body, is formed.

IV. Such communities have certain rites or ceremonies, which keep the original facts in remembrance, and indicate the spirit of the system. This has baptism and the holy eucharist, called here, “The breaking of bread.”

V. To preserve the spirit of the institution, and keep it in connexion with him who is its author, prayer is necessary; prayer for grace to hold what we have, and to gain what we want.

1. “The apostles’ doctrine.” This is to be sought for,



not in our creeds, or confessions of faith, nor indiscriminately in the New Testament, but in the very chapter out of which the text is taken. Peter is the apostle that teaches the multitudes in this place ; and it is in the doctrine that he taught on this occasion by which the three thousand were converted, that those converts are said to have continued stedfast. Now the doctrines taught here are the following :

1. The general influence of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men, to bring about the spiritual kingdom of Christ upon the earth. This God had intended from the beginning, and had declared it by his prophets, by Joel ii. 28, 29, eight hundred years before, which the apostle here quotes. Also by Isai. xlv. 3, seven hundred years before, and by Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27, six hundred years before. This is the first part of the apostles' doctrine ; see here verses 16, 17, 18.

2. The doctrine of general redemption, ver. 21, which should be the consequence of this out-pouring of the Divine Spirit, "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

3. The third doctrine taught by the apostle here is, the vicarious death of Christ, ver. 23, who was delivered up to death for the sins of men.

4. His resurrection also, ver. 24—28, that being the proof that he had not died as a malefactor, but as a sacrifice, and that the end for which he died was accomplished.

5. Christ's intercession, ver. 33. For the apostle states him as being raised to the right hand of God, and as having by his intercession, received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, viz., That which had just now been poured out upon them all, and by which three thousand were now on the eve of being converted ; see ver. 41.

6. Repentance : "Repent every one of you;" ver. 38.

7. Baptism : *ibid*, without which they could not be saved.

8. The remission of sins. It was in reference *εις αφεισιν αμαρτιων*, to the remission or removal of sins, that they were to repent and be baptized ; ver. 39.

9. A ninth doctrine which he preached on this occasion was, that those who repented, &c., should receive the Holy Ghost, ver. 38, 39, to purify their hearts, and make them fit habitations for God ; and thus the spiritual kingdom would be completely restored.

10. Jesus proclaimed in his three-fold offices, Prophet—Priest—and King,—or, Jesus, Lord, and Christ.

These were the doctrines preached by the apostle, and received by the people, and by which they were saved, and in which they continued stedfastly.

II. As doctrines, or teaching concerning God and the souls of men lie at the foundations of all religions, so fellowship or communion is built on the doctrines. Those who heard the doctrines were convinced of the truth, saw the necessity of redemption that is in Jesus, gave up their sins, and sinful companions, associated with those who were like-minded with themselves, and thus was formed the communion of saints, or what was afterwards called, the Church of Christ, and here *κοινωνια των Αποστολων*, the fellowship of the apostles ; all having now, by faith in Christ Jesus, become one in him, equally members in his mystical body, and heirs together of the grace of life.

III. This fellowship was marked and distinguished by certain rites and usages as continued memorials, and testimonials of the facts, Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, &c., which form the ground-work of the religion preached by the apostles. The rites of the Christian religion are only two, and to both of these the apostle

refers, viz., baptism, and the eucharist. The former mentioned, ver. 38; and the latter mentioned in the text “they stedfastly continued (*τη κλασει του αρτου*) in the breaking of the bread;” that is, eating bread and drinking wine, in commemoration of Christ’s death for them.

Now these two observances are like two monumental pillars, reared to commemorate the grand facts of Christianity, particularly the passion and death of Christ; and for this purpose, the eucharist, in particular, was instituted by Christ himself; for its continued observance was to show forth his death, till he should come again; i. e., to judge the quick and the dead.

The argument drawn from Mr. Leslie’s “Easy Method with the Deists,” shows, “That when any facts are said to have taken place in any distant time, that were attested at that time by monumental observances, or by the continual repetition of rites then instituted, and which, by the same kind of people, attesting the same facts, are still preserved and observed, afford the highest and most incontestable evidence of the truth of the facts themselves.” Such are baptism and the Lord’s supper in reference to the inexpugnable facts and truths of the Christian religion.

IV. That every divine institution may be kept up to its utmost spirit and usefulness, it is necessary that the divine energy should ever be in action; and that it may be in action, it must be sought by humble and fervent supplication. Of this, these converts were duly apprized; and hence it is said here, “They continued in prayers”—prayers for power to hold fast the truth they had credited—to grow in the grace which they had received—and to persevere to the end of life.

Now, in all these things, they are said to have continued stedfastly, *ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες*, They were head and heart in them, keeping, as it were, “watch

and ward." Their hearts kept closely attached to them. Hence, they continued in the truth ; grew in grace ; persevered unto death. And the glorious testimony concerning them is registered in the book of life ! Wonderful privilege ! But although we cannot have our names written in the New Testament, yet they may be written among the living in Jerusalem. Our names may be written in the Book of Life, and our inheritance found among them that are sanctified.

From all that we have seen, we gather these facts :  
 1. The people gladly received the truth. 2. They joined together in religious fellowship. 3. Showed forth our Lord's death by receiving the sacrament of his last supper. And 4. Continued instant in prayer. And hence is argued, the great necessity of praying for an effusion of the Divine Spirit, in order to the revival of religion in ourselves, and in the land.

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## No. V.

### DIVINE AND SAVING KNOWLEDGE.

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JOHN V. 20.

20. " We know that the Son of God is come, and that he hath given us an understanding," &c.

No man can make progress in any art or science, or even in religion itself, without a proper knowledge of the principles of that which he makes the object of his study. Knowledge is acquired by slow degrees, particularly in

all human affairs : the process through which the mind of man goes in order to acquire it, seems to be the following.

I. A simple impression made upon the intellect, which constitutes what is called an idea.

II. This impression is conveyed over to the imagination, and there formed into an image, on which the soul contemplates, and relative to which it can reason ; that is, compare the present image with others of a similar or dissimilar kind.

III. It is then presented to the judgment, whose province it is to consider its nature, tendency, usefulness, or unusefulness.

IV. Opinion is then formed of the whole of the mind, takes possession of this as its own, and associates it with other points of knowledge which it may previously have gained.

V. As opinion may be true or false, it rests only on hypothetic conception, or hypothesis ; in order to ascertain its truth, experience, or practical trial, is instituted : this brings opinion, or hypothesis, to the test ; and then, it is ascertained to be either right or wrong, according to the result of the experiment.

VI. This, then, constitutes the proper knowledge or understanding of the subject ; for knowledge, or understanding, implies the complete information gained by the mind ; its whole compass, nature, bearing, and tendency being satisfactorily understood.

VII. From this, wisdom is formed, and begins to act ; for wisdom is that which, having discovered the best end, finds out and uses the best means to accomplish that end.

VIII. Hence the regular practice of the science, the art, trade, or the religious creed, which has been, by the process of reasoning or learning, acquired. All know-

ledge that is not acquired, less or more, in this way, is superficial and uncertain. The tradesman who works without it only imitates: he neither invents nor improves; he works, as it is popularly called, "by rule of thumb," and resembles those fowls which, through all their generations for a thousand years, make the same kind of nests, of the same sort of materials, and in similar places. Thus we ever find some tradesmen and artificers, who make such and such instruments, implements, and utensils, with all their parts, the same length, breadth, and thickness; and the parts, in such and such proportions, not according to the geometrical principles of the science; but because their masters taught them so, and these again from their masters, and so up as far as record can trace them.

All this may be equally true of persons professing Christianity. They have not studied the subject: their minds have not gone through the regular proofs: they have not begun at the beginning: their understanding has received no light; their judgment no conviction; a creed has been proposed to them, formed, it may be, from the unascertained opinions of others: from this, they immediately form their opinion, without the previous instructions of knowledge, and without the exercise of judgment: they are satisfied with their opinion, and subject it not to experiment, or practical trial; and consequently, no practice is founded upon it except what is reprehensibly enthusiastic on the one hand, or grossly superstitious on the other. They cannot have the genuine religion of the heart, nor the pure practical religion of the life. Those who decry experimental religion, show that they have no religion; for what is not proved by experiment, is only hypothesis, and therefore cannot be practical: even their own creed, though sound in itself, may be hypothesis to themselves, for they have not proved

whether it be true or false : they believe in God, without knowing that he is their Father : in Christ, without feeling him as their Saviour ; in the Holy Spirit, without experiencing him as their Sanctifier ; for they have never looked to him to bear witness with their spirits, that they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

Others again content themselves with imaginations, relative to divine things, which they never take the pains to trace to their principles and consequences.

Some form opinions, and reduce those opinions into creeds and confessions of faith, without previous knowledge and judgment ; and then, establish upon these, enthusiastic, Pharisaic or superstitious observances ; and this they call religion ; though, at the same time, they have no proof that the opinions are true, or the observances such as God requires : thus they speak against experimental religion, because they know it not : and the consequence is, they live in doubt, and too often, with such persons, they remain in doubt, till at last, they die in the dark.

All true religion professes to save the soul : where the soul is not saved, the religion is either false in itself, or not used, and thus not properly applied to its saving end. If it does save the soul, it must do so by being experienced ; and experimental religion will manifest itself in the life ; for as it is from the heart that man acts, so the life is, in consequence, what the heart is ; an evil heart necessarily produces an evil life ; and a good heart, on the contrary, produces a good life.

He who, by the Spirit of God, obtains an experimental knowledge of the truth and power of the Christian religion, will evince by his conduct and conversation, that he is alive from the dead. His heart being changed, and saved from sin, a truly holy life will proclaim the indwelling purity. He who is thus changed knows that

he is so ; he was commanded to “taste and see that God was good :” he has made the experiment, and it has succeeded. Having believed with the heart unto righteousness, his tongue has made confession unto salvation, and he has the witness in himself, that he has passed from death unto life : he loves God, and he keeps his commandments.

Such persons, and such alone, can use the language of the text, and say, “We know that the Son of Man is come, and he hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true : this is the true God and eternal life.” The truth of this heavenly religion being thus proved by experience, a preparation for a state of blessedness is the consequence, and eternal life necessarily follows. “God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life !”

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## No. VI.

### SALVATION BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH.

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EPHESIANS ii. 8, 9.

8. “For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God :

9. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

I. OBSER.—THE necessity of collating these verses with the context, as the sense and point depend on what the apostle has stated in the preceding verses.



II. OBSER.—God is sometimes pleased to express a full and independent meaning in a single verse, or short sentence ; and then it is proper to take that verse, and that only as a subject for discussion. But when a verse is a part of the subject, or an inference from one, it is injustice to the meaning to take such a text. It may be such as the preacher may take as a motto, but it can bear no meaning by itself.

The verses which form the text are, for sense and meaning, dependent on the description of two classes of people mentioned above, in reference to their spiritual and moral state. The Ephesians, as Gentiles, or heathens, unacquainted with the true God, living under the internal domination of evil, were bringing forth in their lives all the fruits of unrighteousness. The Jews, professing the true religion, observing its rites and ceremonies, were yet, in their hearts and lives, as wicked and as profligate as the others. These were the two classes.

1. He represents them as dead in trespasses and sins : not naturally dead ; that is, the soul separated from the body. Nor merely spiritually dead, the soul separated from God—but forensically dead—dead in law—sentenced to death—and in that state incapable of performing any civil act. This, which is a maxim in our own law, was well understood in the Grecian law, and was equally well understood among the Jews. They were all dead in their trespasses and in their sins ; dead, because of their being accursed, convicted, and sentenced to death.

2. This death was manifest. They walked according to the course of this world, *κατα τον αιωνα του κοσμου τουτου* the fashion, customs, manners, not only of the then race of men, but of that age ; its idolatries, pleasures, and crimes.—Remark on the different ages.

3. They had not only a fallen, corrupt nature in themselves, and the vicious example of society at large, to confirm them in evil ; but they were under diabolic influence. They walked *κατα τον αρχοντα της εξουσιας το αερος*, according to the chief of the power of the air, who filled them with such notions, unsolid science, learned pride, &c., by whose influences they became vain in their imaginations ; and they walked according to the spirit which then *ενεργουντος εν τοις υιοις της απειθειας*, was in a state of the utmost energy in the children of disobedience. Here, disobedience is personified, and those wicked Gentiles and Jews were its children.

4. In consequence of all this, they were actuated by the irregular desires of the flesh, *της σαρκος*, the whole animal and sensual nature, *και των διανοιων*, of the imaginative faculties, the energetic devil working on and in the whole faculties of the fallen nature : and this work being complete, they are represented as children of wrath *τεκνα οργης*. Here, wrath or punishment is personified ; and as they were sons of disobedience, so they were sons of punishment, or judicial retribution. So they were to die for their crimes.

Such was the moral state of both Jews and Gentiles in the days of the apostles ; and yet those Gentiles, in learning and science, were most eminent. Witness their literary productions, which still remain, and have never been surpassed, or even equalled ; and the remains of their architecture, sculpture, and painting, which are models for every age to copy ! Even their idolatry stood in reference to their learning and science. In these, three Grecian cities, and the territories connected with them, became pre-eminent, viz., Corinth, and its territory Achaia, Arcadia, &c., excelled in all learning, eloquence, and every branch of human knowledge : Athens, and its territory Attica, possessing all the above, and im-

proving them by the most sedulous cultivation ; and was, beside, the seat of the Areopagus, the perfect tribunal, &c. : Ephesus, and its territory of Ionia and Casea, famous for its Temple of the great goddess Diana, the patroness and giver of chastity, as Athens was for the Temple of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, and one of the seven wonders of the world. All these, with all their wisdom, learning, science, &c., were sinners, dead, bedevilled, &c. : and the Jews, with all their privileges, not less so.

This is the moral state of the two classes of persons (the Gentiles and the Jews), described in the preceding verses. Consider next what God has done to save them from this state and its consequences.

I. That God, who is rich in mercy, manifested this by his great love to both classes ; that is, to the whole human race, quickened them, *συνεζωοποιμησε τῷ Χριστῷ* “raised them together by Christ :” the death of Christ for the human race was the cause of their salvation from sin. This salvation began by the quickening or life-giving Spirit, enlivening their souls, and raising them by this divine afflatus into a life from the death of trespasses and sins. Is there not here an allusion to God’s breathing into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, to make him a living soul ?

And the effect was so glorious, that it showed the superlative riches of his grace, *τον ὑπερβαλλοντα πλουτον της χαριτος αυτου εν χρηστοτητι εφ’ ἡμας εν Χριστῷ Ἰησου.* “in his innate goodness, through Christ Jesus.” Mark,

1. The goodness of the divine nature,—the source whence Christ proceeded as the Saviour of men.

2. Christ’s incarnation and death,—the cause of man’s recovery.

II. The means by and through which this mercy was applied : they were saved by grace, through faith.

Salvation implies deliverance from danger imminent—

danger threatened—from thralldom actual. God's justice had threatened them with eternal perdition, because of their crimes.

They had proceeded so far, that they were now on the brink of ruin. Justice had seized upon them and was dragging them to the eternal prison and execution. They were consigned to death *εν παραπτωμασι* "in their offences," falls, transgressions. They were under the power and dominion of sin; under the guilt and condemnation of sin; under the pollution and infection of sin. The salvation by Christ reaches these three particulars.

1. He breaks the power of sin, by giving them repentance.

2. He removes the guilt of sin, by giving them pardon.

3. He takes away the defilement of sin, by cleansing the soul from all unrighteousness.

Not by works; that is, any desert or worth in the persons so saved: nor on account of the merit of any godly works they may have done, are doing, or can do. In a work of merit, two things are to be considered,

(1) The work must be done by the person himself, of himself, independently

(2) The work must be worth that for which it is done.

Now, no man can do any by and of himself. He lives, moves, and has his being from God. The good disposition, which must furnish the motive, comes from him, as well as the power by which it is done. Hence, we cannot buy God's favour with God's property.

Again, pardon and eternal life are blessings of an infinite value; therefore, no finite or limited energy, however good, can be of infinite value; because the acts must be as limited as the being which produced them,

and cannot be of equal value, and consequently, cannot purchase infinite blessings. Salvation by works is, therefore, impossible.

But here, it is stated, that salvation is by faith ; that is, God has promised to give remission of sins to every penitent, and purification to every believer, on their believing in Christ, as having offered himself as a sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the world. God cannot lie ; therefore, what he has promised, he will perform. We should believe that he can, and that he will do this. By doing this, he puts honour on the sacrificial death of his Son, and proclaims him to be of infinite merit : and by saving no man, but through Jesus Christ, he shows that salvation can come through no other.

This faith is supposed by many to be the gift of God, by a power, as sovereign, as that which created the world. But this mistakes the text : “ it is the gift of God,” does not refer to faith, but to grace. By grace are ye saved by faith, and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; that is, the grace that saves is the gift of God ; in the most special sense, is the gift of God. Faith apprehends this grace, and that faith we exert by the common influence of God, as we eat, drink, live, breathe, concoct our food, &c. : for in God we live, move, and have our being, and cannot exist without him. He gives us intellect, power to apprehend, comprehend, and confide. This we can do by that power, without any miraculous agency. Hence, it is as criminal not to believe, when God exhorts us to believe, as it would be to refuse eating, when God has given us food, and digestive organs. He, then, that believeth not, maketh God a liar.

## A FRAGMENT IN FAVOUR OF GENERAL REDEMPTION.

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IT is through the sacrificial offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we have access to God; and it is through that sacrificial offering, that God can forgive the sins of mankind. Jesus has taken upon him the nature of man; and in human nature he made expiation for the sins of that nature: consequently, all those whose nature he shared, have a right to the merit of his death. All those who partake of human nature have a right to apply to God, in virtue of that, for remission of sins.

On this foundation the doctrine of general redemption most absolutely and immoveably rests. There is no argument by which it can be shaken, unless it can be proved, that God has not made of one blood all the nations of men that dwell upon the face of the earth. The argument must be founded on that, that human beings originated from different stocks, each of which stocks produced different families. Then, it would follow, that of which stock soever Christ descended, the benefits of his death would apply to that stock only, and to no other. When this is proved, it can then be proved, that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, has not tasted death for every man. But with all the testimony of God for us—with the purest arguments that can be drawn, it is that we argue, “He made of one blood all nations to dwell

upon the face of the earth." Every human being that has been in the world, or shall be in the world, has descended, and must descend, from the first pair God created. And as Jesus Christ took part of that nature, the benefits of his death must necessarily apply to every human being, who has descended from Adam, or who shall descend from him. ALL stand upon this ground, and every man may call the human nature of Jesus—**BROTHER.**

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